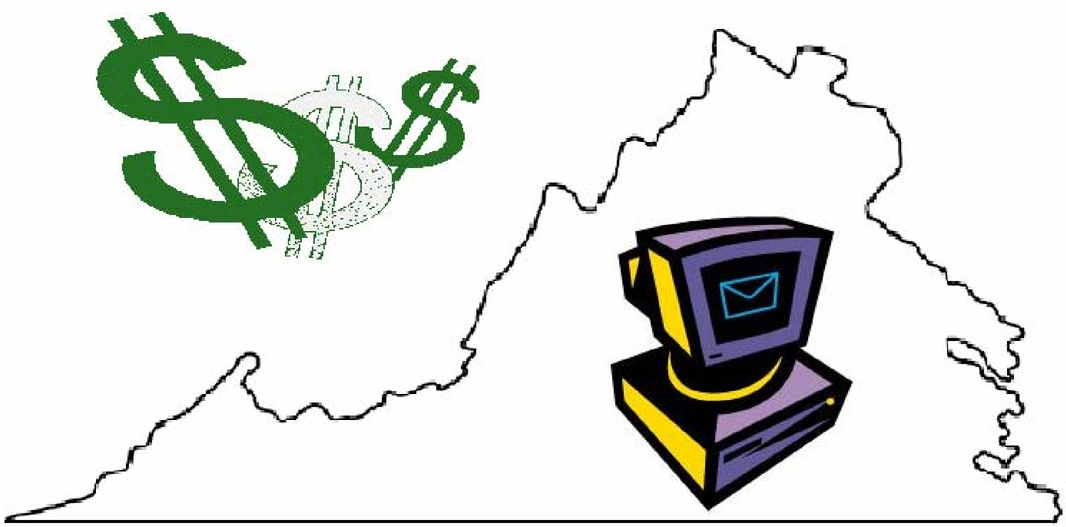
VAFiling

Version 3.0



User Handbook

Introduced on April 15, 2004

Revised: May 12, 2004

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

The Virginia State Board of Elections (SBE) has developed software – known as VAFiling – that enables candidates and committees to organize financial transactions and to "e-file" required disclosure reports. In addition to electronic filing, VAFiling can generate paper reports for submission to local voter registrar offices, which are not yet equipped to receive electronic reports.

SBE has designed the software as a report writer with limited capabilities for managing data beyond filing required contribution and expense reports. A one-time license costs $35. This price includes free updates to future versions. Candidates or committees whose needs call for more comprehensive campaign management software may want to contact one of the vendors whose products have been found to be compatible with SBE e-filing specifications. The approved vendor list can be found at the SBE Web site: http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/sbe_approved_vendors.htm

Since its introduction in 1999, VAFiling has gone through several revisions. The latest edition – VAFiling Version 3.0 – was released in April 2004.

The software is designed to operate on personal computers running Microsoft Windows ® operating systems: Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows ME and Windows 2000 and Windows XP. Your computer must be at least a 486, have at least 8MB RAM, a processor with at least 66MHz, and at least 5MB free disk space.

Section 1.1 - DOWNLOADING THE SOFTWARE

The installation file is available by download from the Web site of the State Board of Elections. To obtain a link to the download, potential users should first submit an Electronic Filing Agreement and an invoice along with a check for $35 made payable to ”Virginia State Board of Elections.”

New candidates and committees that were formed after July 1, 2004 can fill out the Electronic Filing Agreement as part of their Statement of Organization. Those candidates and committees that already have registered with the State Board of Elections and later decide to use the software should file a separate Electronic Filing Agreement.

Click here for the forms: http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Electronic-Filing/Electronic_Filing.htm

The forms and check should be mailed to: Campaign Finance Division, Virginia State Board of Elections, Suite 101, 200 North 9th Street, Richmond, VA 23219-3485

Once your payment has been received, the Campaign Finance Division will email you a link to the download. You should save the file to your hard drive (“save to disk”) in the following directory: C:\Program Files/VAFiling

The size of the file is approximately 5 MB and download times will vary depending on the speed of the connection.

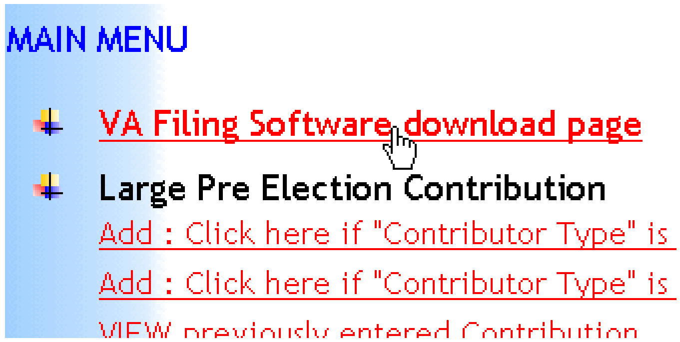
- Cable connections will take up to 1 minute.
- DSL connections will take up to 5 min.
- Dial-up connections could take over an hour.

You may also purchase a CD Rom if you do not wish to download the file from the Internet. This might be the preferred method if you have a dial-up connection. CD-ROM purchases include an additional $6.00 charge for shipping and handling. Please contact the Campaign Finance Division of the State Board of Elections in Richmond at 804-864-8901 or Toll-Free at 800.552.9745.

Section 1.2 - INSTALLING THE SOFTWARE from the INTERNET

If you are not already logged on to the Committee Login site then open up (double-click on) Internet Explorer and sign on to the secure web site at **http://www.sbe.state.va.us/cfda/large/index.asp**

STEP 1: Click the menu item named "VA Filing Software download page**"** as shown in the following figure:

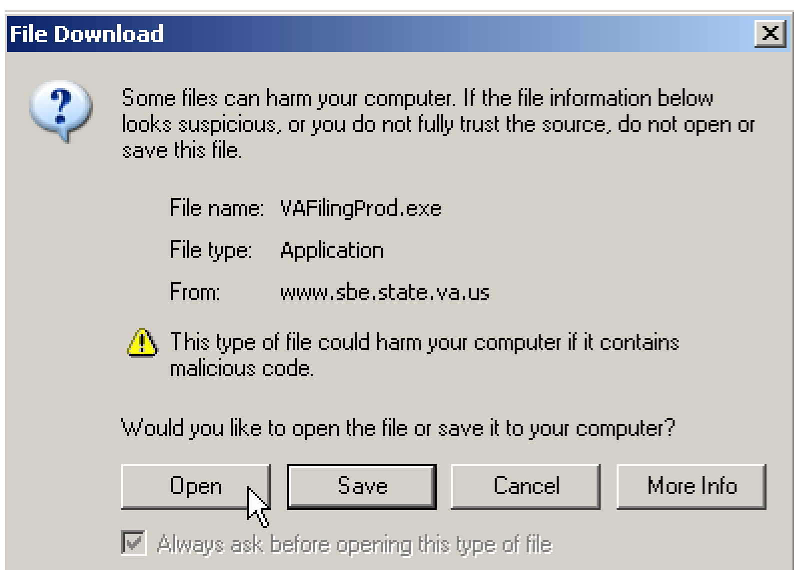


STEP 2: Now, click on the link to download the setup program as shown below:

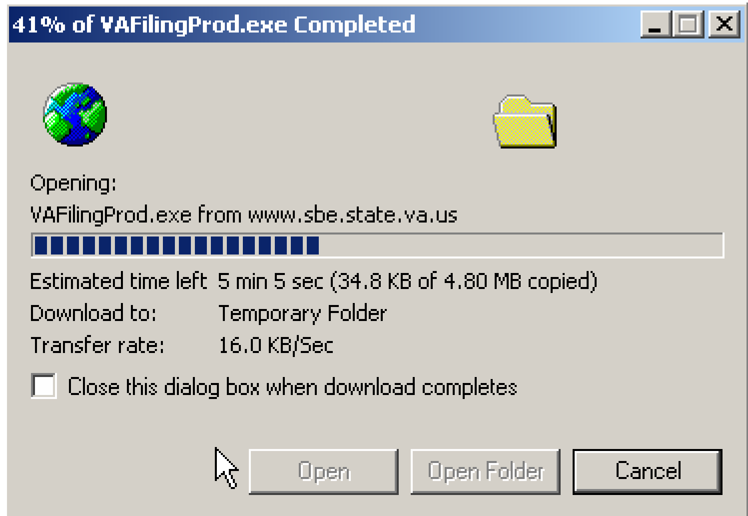
Download Setup Program for VA Filing - Version 3.0

STEP 3: This will bring up the File Download box. When the File Download box appears (see below), you must click on the button that allows you to OPEN the file from the current location. Go ahead and click the OPEN button as shown in the figure below.

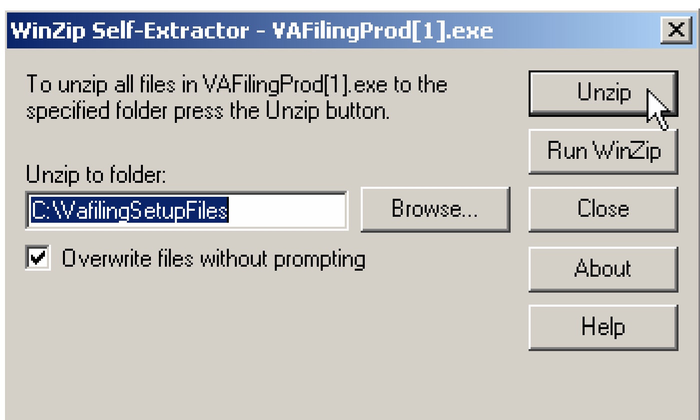
Please Note: the screen you see may be a little different depending on the type of Microsoft Windows operating system you use, Please select the option of opening the file from the current location by clicking the OPEN button. Some times you will see a WARNING message as shown below, please ignore it and proceed further. After you click OPEN as shown below, The Actual download of the VA Filing Setup Program will start.



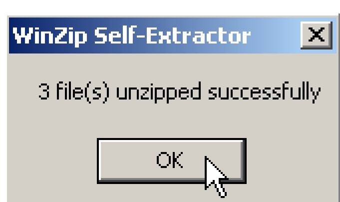
STEP 4: While the file is being downloaded you will see a blue bar indicating the amount of download completed as shown below.



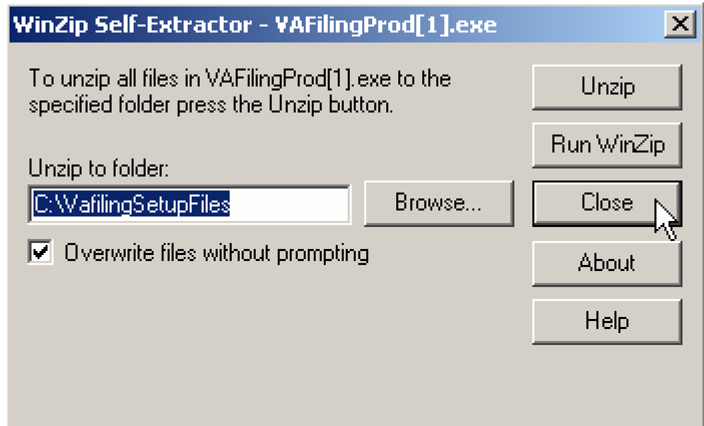
STEP 5: After the VA Filing Setup file download is complete then you will automatically see the **WinZip Self-Extractor window** come up. Make sure the path is **C:\VafilingSetupFiles**. Click on the **UNZIP** button as shown in the figure below.



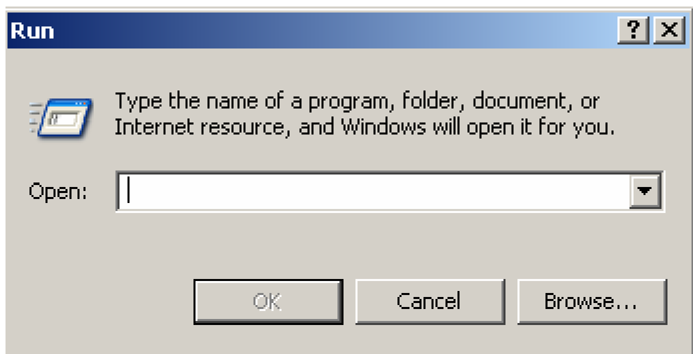
STEP 6: You will now see a message telling you that the files have been unzipped successfully.



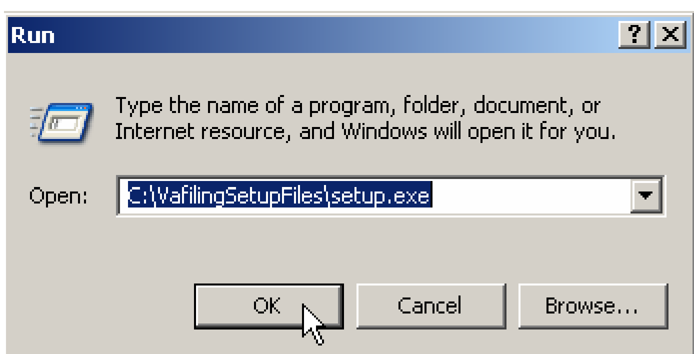
STEP 7: Click **Close** to close the WinZip Self-Extractor window as shown in the figure below.



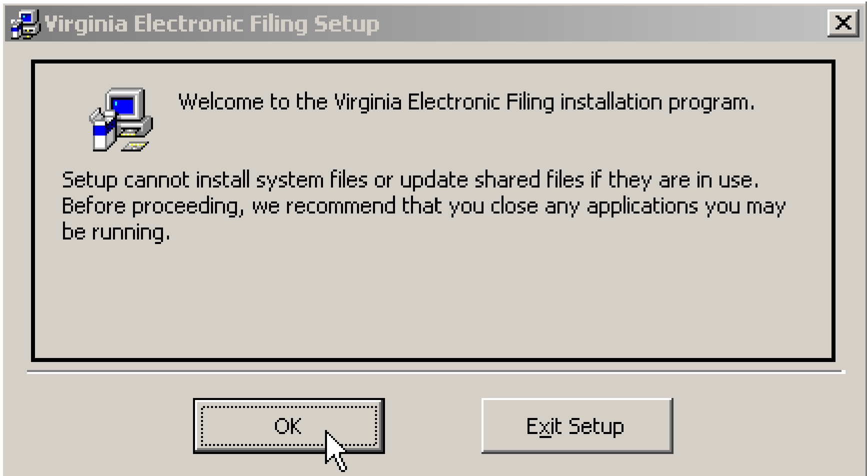
STEP 8: Bring up the Window's Start Menu by clicking the **START** button the bottom left hand corner of the screen. When the Start menu pops up select or click on **RUN**, then the Run window will pop up as shown in the figure below.



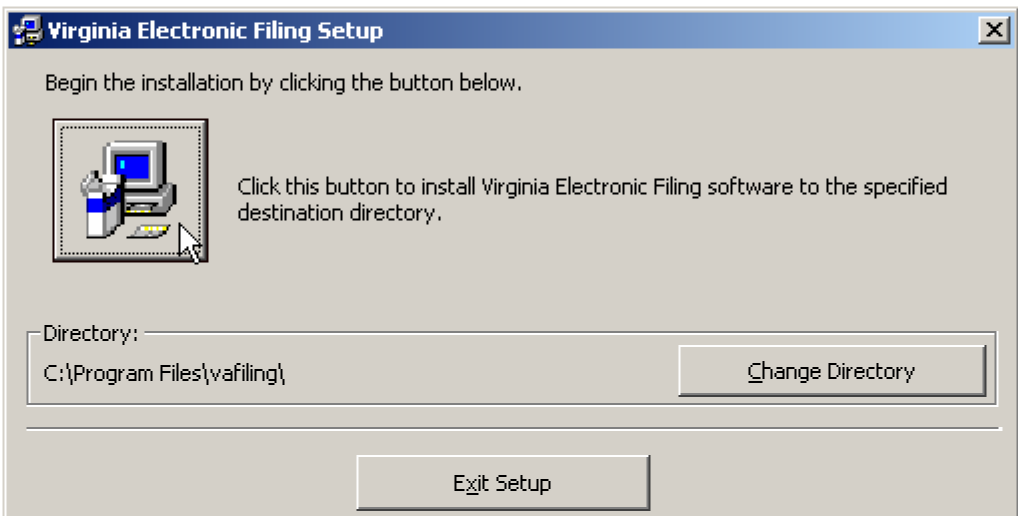
STEP 9: Type **C:\VafilingSetupFiles\setup.exe** into the Open Text box as shown in the figure below and after you are done entering the information click **OK** as shown in the figure below:



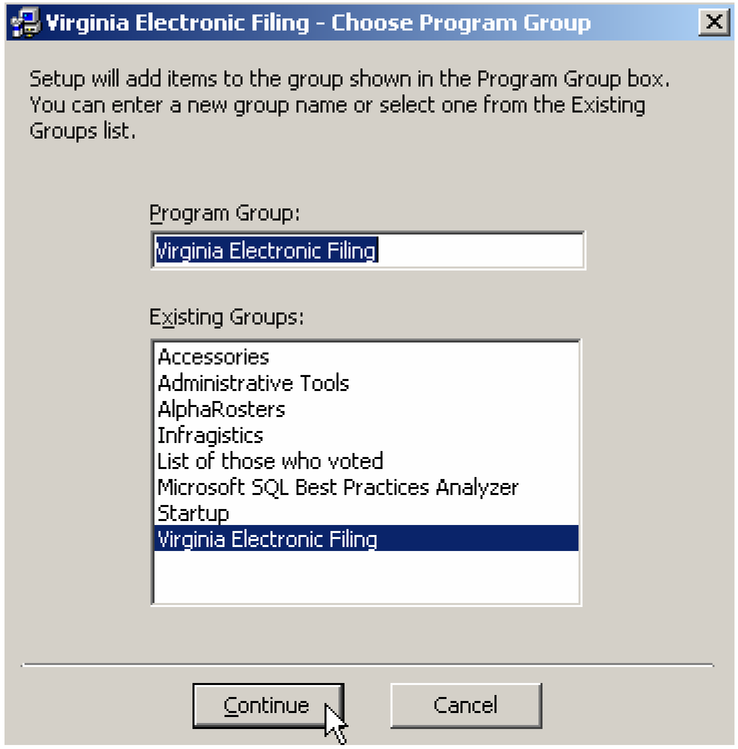
STEP 10: Once you click OK as indicated above, the VA Filing Program Setup screen will pop up as shown below. Click **OK** to begin installation as shown below:



STEP 11: After clicking OK on the above screen, the VA Filing Setup window 2 appears as shown below. Click on the button as shown in the figure below:



STEP 12: Next click on the button **Continue** as shown in he figure below.



STEP 13: Just click **OK** to complete the setup program

STEP 14: The Installation of the VA Filing Program has been completed.

Problems with Installation? Read the instructions carefully and repeat the process. If you continue to have problems, email your questions to efile@sbe.virginia.gov or support@vpap.org.

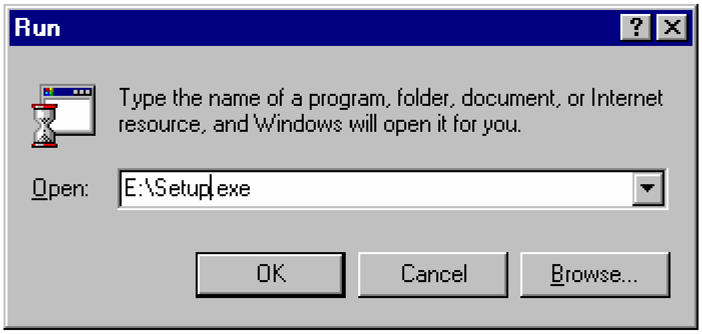
Section 1.3 - INSTALLING THE SOFTWARE from a CD-ROM

Installing the software should take only a few minutes. Once you have the saved the install file on your hard-drive, follow the steps below:

Step 1: Close all programs running on your computer.

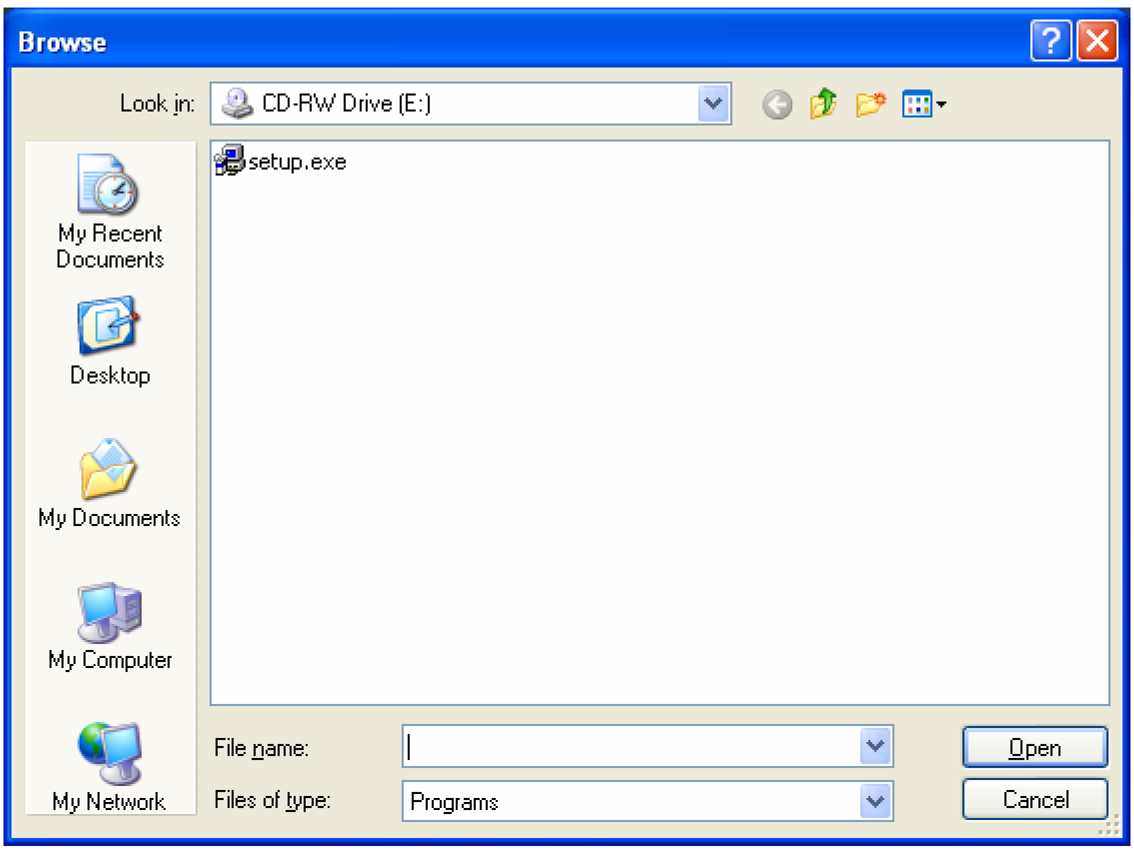
Step 2: Click on START → RUN.

Step 3: On the resulting screen below, click BROWSE.



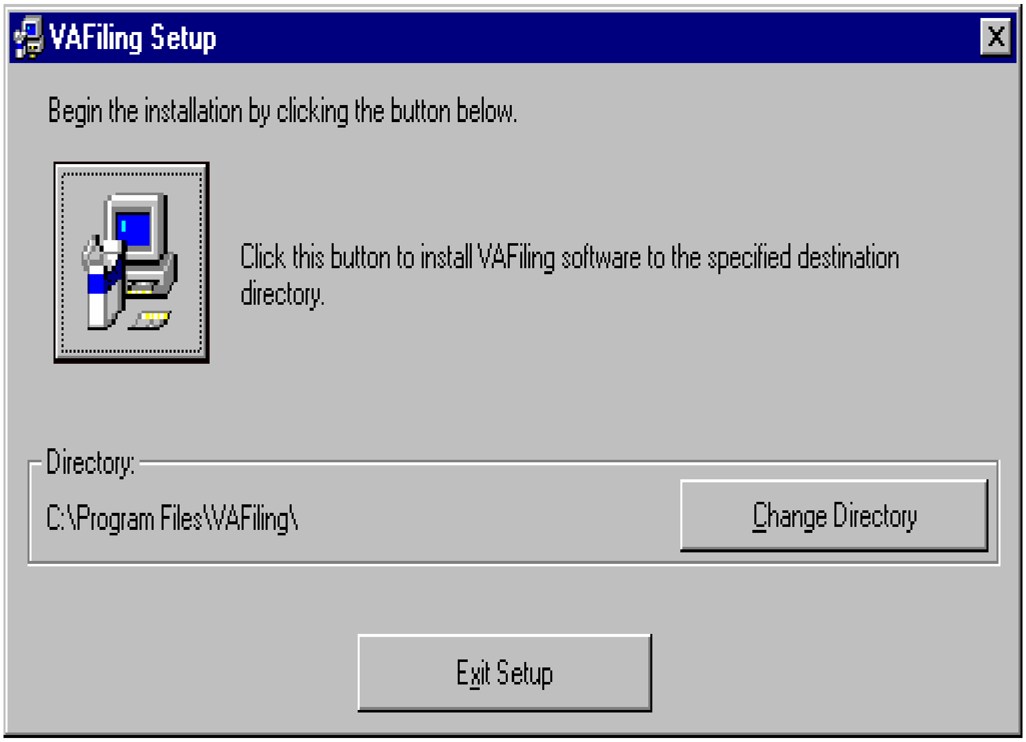
Step 4: This will open a Browse screen like the one shown below. Follow the path to c:\my downloads\setup.exe. Click once on "Setup.exe" and click the OPEN button.

Note: Those installing from a CD Rom should browse for the CD Rom drive, which will be identified by the icon of a circular disk. (On most machines, this should be the "D", "E" or "F" drive.) Look for a File called "Setup.exe" shown on the screen. Click once on "Setup.exe" and click the OPEN button.



Step 5: You will return to the Run screen (Shown in Step 4) Click OK.

Step 6: This will lead to a "VAFiling Setup" screen, like the one shown below. To begin the process, click on the large button in the upper left corner that contains a PC image.



Note

The software will be installed in the default directory: c:\program files\VAFiling. You should use this directory, unless you have a compelling reason to do otherwise.

Step 7: Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the installation.

Step 8: At the end of the process, you should get a prompt that says “VAFiling was installed successfully.” Click OK.

Problems with Installation? Read the instructions carefully and repeat the process. If you continue to have problems, email your questions to support@vpap.org or efile@sbe.virginia.gov.

Section 2: GETTING STARTED

The instructions below will help you create a database in which you will store all financial transactions that must be disclosed under the Virginia Campaign Finance Disclosure Act.

Section 2.1 - Creating a Database

Once you have installed VAFiling on your PC, the first step will be to create a file – or "database" – where you will store your committee's financial transactions: receipts, expenditures, loans, etc.

You will continue using this same database as long as your candidate or committee is required to report information to the State Board of Elections.

To launch the software, click on START → PROGRAMS → VAFILING.

Once the software is open, click on the FILE menu across the top and select NEW. This will lead to a dialogue box where you will be asked to enter a file name. In naming the file, select the last name of your candidate or the name/acronym of your political committee. Click SAVE.

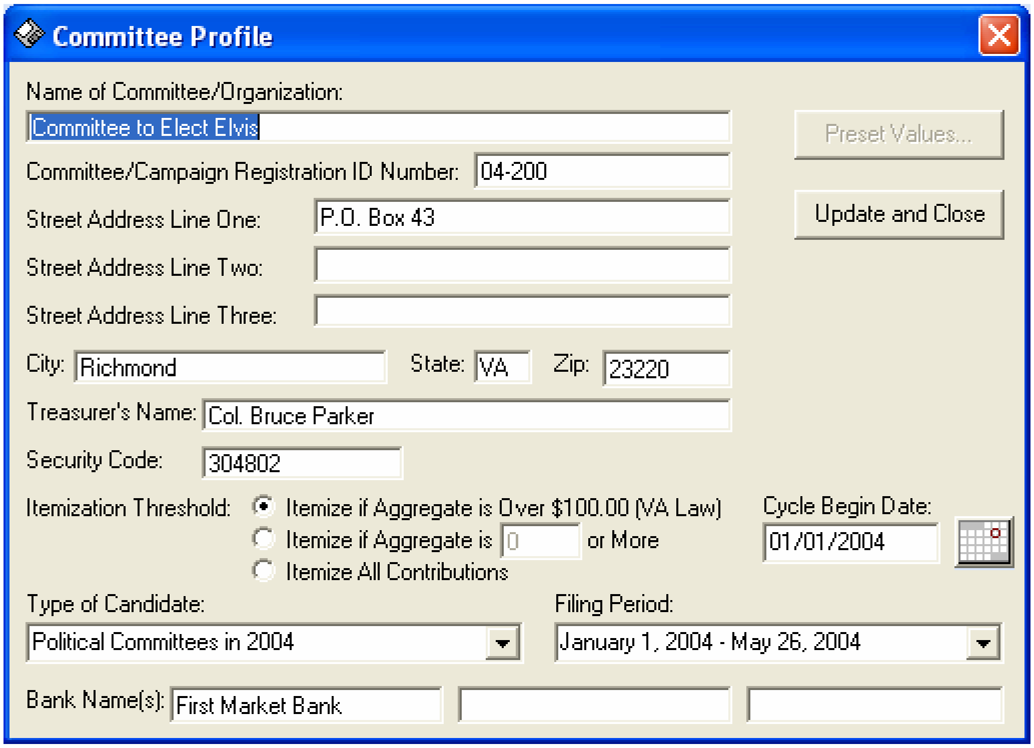
Your database will reside in the following folder: c:\program files\vafiling

**** <u>VAFiling Tip</u> ****

> One of the most common mistakes made by new users is to assume you should create a new database for each filing period or election year. This is not true. You should continue using this same database as long as the candidate is running or the committee is open.
>
> As you will see, this will make the treasurer's job easier by preventing them from having to re-type the basic information for repeat contributors or payees and provide the candidate or committee with a single repository of its financial transactions.

Section 2.2 - Establishing a "Profile"

Once you have created a database, the software will lead you to the "Profile" screen (shown below). Here is where you will list the official name of your committee, address, bank depository and other important information.



Many of the entries on this form are identical to the information requested on the cover sheet of SBE's paper forms for campaign finance reports. However, there are several important features that are unique to the software and/or electronic filing.

Section 2.3 - Committee/Campaign Registration ID Number

The "Registration ID Number" is a critical piece of information for candidates and committees that e-file. Entering this number correctly will assist in the security of your electronic transmission and ensure your committee gets credit for timely filings.

Note: This feature is required only if a candidate or a committee plans to file electronically. Local candidates that are generating paper reports can leave this line blank.

For many years, the State Board of Elections has assigned registration numbers to political committees registered in Virginia. With electronic filing, SBE also assigns registration numbers to candidates for the General Assembly and for statewide office. You will receive the registration number at the time your committee is registered. However, if you are already registered and/or do not know what your registration number is please contact the contact the Campaign Finance Division of the State Board of Elections in Richmond at 804-864-8901 or Toll-Free at 800.552.9745.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Political committees should drop the "VA" from their committee ID number. For example, a political committee with the ID "VA09-450" should list the ID as "09-450"

Section 2.4 - Security Code

The six-digit security code serves as an electronic signature; the same way your PIN number allows you to access ATM transactions. It is essential for you to enter this number correctly. SBE policy calls for automatic rejection of any e-filed report without a Security Code.

Note: This feature is required only if a candidate or a committee plans to file electronically. Local candidates that are generating paper reports can leave this line blank.

SBE will provide this code at the time that your committee is registered. However, if you are already registered and/or do not know your security code, contact the Campaign Finance Division of the State Board of Elections in Richmond at 804-864-8901 or Toll-Free at 800.552.9745.

Section 2.5 - Itemization Threshold

State law requires candidate reports to list the name, address and occupation of all donors who have given more than $100 in cash and in-kind gifts during an election cycle. State law imposes the same requirements for political committees for donors that have given more than $100 in a calendar year.

With VAFiling, you should enter in the name and address of all donors into your database, even those who give $100 or less. The names of small donors will remain confidential and will not be included in reports sent to SBE.

VAFiling allows you to specify whether the reporting threshold is the state minimum or another figure. You can choose one of the following:

Itemize if Aggregate is Over $100

The default option is the minimum disclosure required under Virginia law, which requires itemization when a donor's contribution for an election cycle exceeds $100. (With this option, the name of a contributor who has given a total of $100 will not be listed in your report. However, you must itemize as soon as a donor's total reaches $100.01.)

Itemize if Aggregate is $__ or More

The second option allows candidates and political committees to continue the common practice of going beyond the state's minimum disclosure standard. Many campaigns list donors who give $100 or more. If you wish to choose this option, click on the button to the left of the selection and type the desired threshold into the form.

Itemize All Contributions

The second option allows candidates and political committees to go beyond the state reporting requirements and to list the name of <u>all</u> contributors, regardless of the amount.

**** <u>VAFiling Tip</u> ****

While few candidates select the "itemize all contributions" option for reports to the State Board of Elections or local authority, it is a handy feature for in-house purposes. For instance, if a candidate asks for a list of EVERYONE who has donated during the last month, the treasurer can create a customized report for the candidate by using the "itemize all contributions" option. The treasurer should reset the itemization threshold to its normal setting when they are preparing their next report.

Section 2.6 - Cycle Begin Date

As stated earlier, candidates and political committees should continue to use the same database from reporting period to reporting period and even from year to year. The "Cycle Begin Date" feature allows candidates to specify the beginning point of the *current* election cycle or for political committees to specify the starting point of the current calendar year. Selecting the proper begin date will ensure an accurate computation of each donor's contributions for the current cycle and prevent money donated in previous cycles/years to be included in the totals.

Determining the "Cycle Begin Date"

The guidelines below will help you select the correct "Cycle Begin Date." If you are uncertain, please consult SBE's website for a complete listing of dates.
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Filing%20Schedules?Report_filing_Schedule.html

- Political committees simply enter the first day of the current reporting year as the "Cycle Begin Date." For instance, a committee reporting donations in 2005 should enter "01/01/2005."
- Candidates running for an office for the first time should enter the first date they began receiving donations as the "Cycle Begin Date."
- Candidates running for the same office in consecutive elections shall enter the first day in January following the last General Election for the office sought. For example, a Senate candidate who ran in the November 2003 General Election and plans to run again in November 2007 should enter their Cycle Begin Date as "01/01/2004"
- Candidates who won/lost an election and may not run for the same office again, but who have not provided a final accounting of their funds, shall enter the first day in January following the last General Election for the same office. For example, a House of Delegates candidate that lost in the November 2003 election but still has a campaign account open as of January 1, 2004 should enter a Cycle Begin Date of 01/01/2004. Candidates who have not provided a final report and have not closed out their accounts must continue to file on an Election Year schedule prescribed by SBE, even if they are no longer active candidates.

  Important Note: Entering the cycle begin date of the next cycle is not a declaration of candidacy and does not imply a candidate's intent to seek re-election or run again.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Candidates who began using VAFiling after the "Begin Date" of the current year/cycle must keypunch all donations dating to the start of the election cycle. The same is true for political committees who begin using the software after already having filed at least one report that covers part of the current year.

Section 2.7 -Type of Candidate

From the pull-down menu, please select the appropriate description of your candidate/committee and the year of the next election. Candidates running in a special election or for an office not listed in the pull-down menu should select "All Others." Candidates who ran for an office that will not be on the ballot again until after 2005, should select "Candidates not on the ballot until 2007 or later"

Once you select or change the "Type of Candidate," the software will prompt you to select a "Filing Period" which is described below.

Section 2.8 - Filing Period

Most of the features on the Profile will remain unchanged for months and even years. The "Filing Period," however, is one option that will change after each reporting deadline is completed.

The filing period you select will be the next report that you will file according to the schedule published by the SBE. You can change the reporting period at any time, such as when you need to amend a past report or create a customized report for internal use.

When you select a reporting period for the first time or later change the reporting period, the program automatically will prompt you to adjust what are known as "Preset Values" that are used to compile your summary schedules. See below for more details.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Do not worry if the "filing period" you need is not listed: VAFiling allows you to add or customize your own filing periods. See Section 7.1 for instructions for adding or removing filing periods.

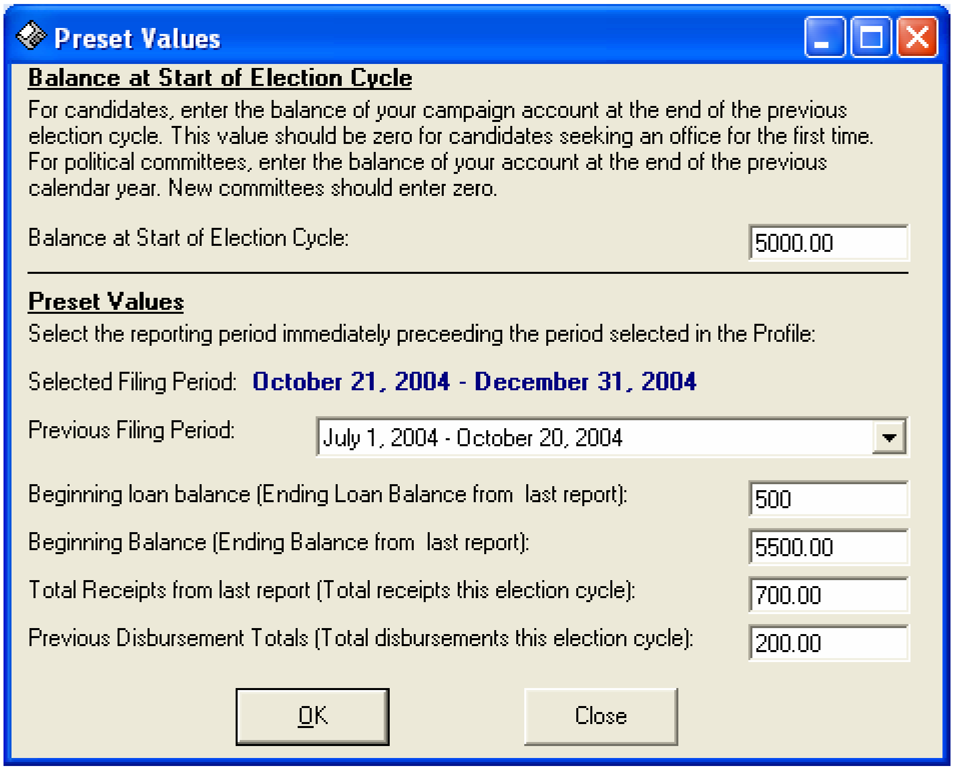
Section 2.9 - Preset Values

SBE's campaign finance reports include two summary schedules (G and H) that detail the amount raised/spent during the filing period and, cumulatively, during the election cycle or calendar year. The summary schedules include key numbers such as the account balance at the start of the election cycle, the account balance at the start of the filing period and the loan balance at the start of the filing period. These numbers are called "Preset Values."

Version 3.0 has been upgraded so the software can remember your Preset Values from one filing period to the next. However, all users must manually enter one Preset Value. And all first-time users must manually enter other values for your initial report.

<u>There are three ways to access the "Preset Values" screen:</u>

1. Click on Jump! and click on the "PRESET VALUES" button.
2. Click on ADD DATA → PRESET VALUES.
3. From the Profile, changing the "Type of Candidate" or "Filing Period" will automatically take you to the "Preset Values" screen.



Step 1: Double-check to make sure you have selected the correct "Filing Period," which is shown in bold, blue letters.

Step 2: Select the most recent filing period from the pull-down menu.

Note: Leave this blank if you are a first-time user.

Step 3: Confirm the four preset values from the most recent report. Make any changes if necessary.

<u>Beginning Loan Balance</u> (Schedule G -- Line 15 from most recent report)

<u>Beginning Balance</u> (Schedule H -- Line 19 from most recent report)

<u>Total Receipts</u> (Schedule H -- Line 24 from most recent report.)

<u>Previous Disbursement Total</u> (Schedule H -- Line 28 from most recent report.)

Note: For new candidates filing their first report, these values should all be zero.

Note: On the first report of a new election cycle (candidates) or new calendar year (political committees), "Total Receipts" and "Previous Disbursement Total" should be zero.

Step 4: Click OK.

Section 2.10 - Balance at Start of Election Cycle

Starting in 2004, each political committee and each candidate has been assigned a specific “begin date” for each election cycle. Committees run on calendar year cycles, so the starting date is always January 1 of the year in which the activity takes place. The “start” date for candidates who have run for the same office before is January 1 of the year following the year in which the last election for that office was held. The “start” date for candidates running for an office for the first time is the date they begin receiving contributions.

For “Balance at Start of Election Cycle,” enter the cash balance that the candidate or committee had in its campaign account on the “cycle begin date.” This number will appear on Schedule H, Line 21. You do not need to change this number until the beginning of the next cycle.

NOTE: When beginning a new election cycle, you must enter “Beginning Balance” to match the “Balance at Start of Election Cycle.”

Section 3: Navigation Features

This section contains basic navigation features that will be familiar to those who are accustomed to Microsoft Windows® operating systems.

Section 3.1- Creating a Desktop Shortcut

Once you have installed VAFiling on your PC, you should create an icon on your Windows desktop to make it easier to open the program. Follow the steps below:

1. Launch Windows Explorer (START → MY COMPUTER) and locate the following directory: **c:\program files\vafiling**.
2. Look for a file called **VAFiling.exe** (it's the one with the image of a floppy disk beside it).
3. Right click on **VaFiling.exe**. In the resulting menu, select the **Create Shortcut** option. The system creates a file with the name **Shortcut to VAFiling.exe**.
5. Left click on the shortcut file and, while holding down the mouse, drag and drop the shortcut icon onto the desktop.

Section 3.2 - Navigation Basics

VAFiling gives you a variety of ways to move from task to task. Some users may prefer navigating with the mouse to activate pull-down menus and make selections. Some users may wish to use the keyboard to make selections. Still others might want to use a combination of mouse and keyboard.

Using the Mouse: The file menu is displayed across the top of the screen -- File, Jump!, Add Data, View/Edit, Prepare C&E Report, Window, Help

Click on any item to reveal a pull-down menu of additional choices.

Using the Keyboard

Each item in the menu bar has one underlined letter, such as Add Data.

To display the options under Add Data, type ALT-A. Each of the choices, in turn, has one letter underlined. Use the ALT key to make your selection, such as ALT-D to choose "D - Expenditures."

Using the Keyboard and Mouse

The Jump! menu provides one screen from which to click on choices without going to the individual menu options. Type ALT-J to display the Jump! Menu, shown below:

<u>To close this window:</u>

Click anywhere on the VA Filing screen or enable one of the **Add** or **View/Edit** or **Profile** buttons on the menu. The system closes this Jump window and displays the appropriate screen requested.

Section 4: ENTERING DATA

VAFiling includes a separate data-entry screen for each reporting schedule (A through I) in SBE's disclosure forms. Each of these screens can be accessed through the main toolbar, by clicking ADD DATA → (SELECT SCHEDULE).

**** VAFiling Tip ****

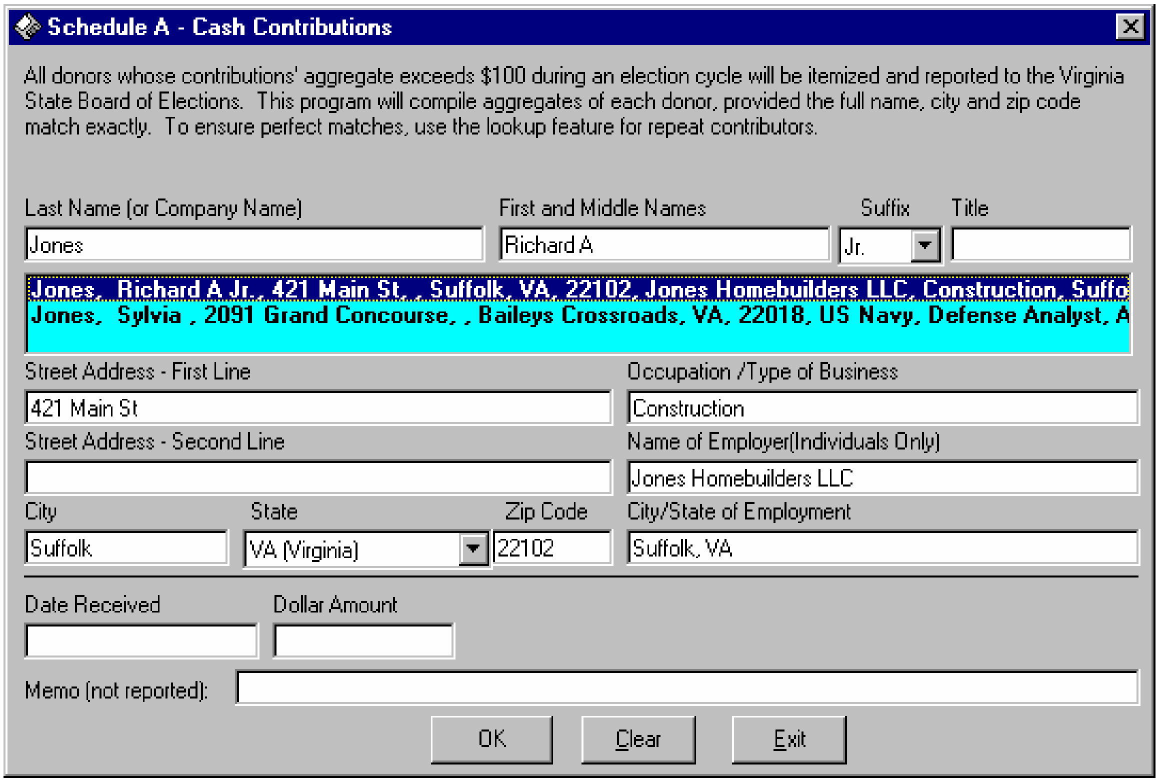
Candidates who began using VAFiling after the "Begin Date" of the current year/cycle must keypunch all donations dating to the start of the election cycle. The same is true for political committees who begin using the software after already having filed at least one report that covers part of the current year.

Section 4.1 - General Guidelines

In the days of paper disclosure, campaign treasurers had to keep "two" sets of contribution books. They would keep one list of contributions greater than $100 and a second list of contributions of $100 or less. Several times a year, they would have to copy -- either by hand or with a typewriter -- the names, addresses and occupations of the "big" donors onto SBE's reporting forms.

VAFiling saves you time by consolidating all financial information into a single list. You should enter all donations, even those from donors who fall below the itemization threshold. (Typing the names of small donors into your database will not cause this information to be disclosed to the public.) Entering all donations now will save many hours in the future and give you a single database of donors, which can be used in a mail merge.

Entering all donors also makes sense because adding subsequent donations takes only a few keystrokes. Each of the major schedules has a labor saving function that that searches for donors and vendors who already have been entered into your database. The aqua-shaded window is activated as information is typed into the last name field. The look-up window for Schedule A is shown below:



The program displays persons or companies that match the name you are entering. If you find a match, simply click on the selection in the look-up window, and all the contributor/vendor's information -- name, address, occupation -- will fill the screen. In most cases, all you need to enter is the date and amount of the new transaction.

The State Board of Elections strongly recommends using this look-up feature to add subsequent transactions from previously identified donors and vendors. Using the look-up will eliminate typos and ensure that VAFiling calculates aggregate contributions in an accurate way.

Each schedule contains a "memo" field that is for your internal purposes only. The information in this field is never, under any circumstances, reported to the State Board of Elections. You can use this field to record notes and other proprietary information about a particular donor or vendor. Some committees take advantage of the "Memo" field to record the name of their PAC contact, salutation or other information that can be used in a mail merge.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Dollar Amounts: *Enter numbers without the dollar sign; the program will add the dollar sign. Whole dollar contributions do not require decimals. (Example: You receive a check for $100. Enter as 100. The program will convert this to $100.00)*

Dates: Can be entered in a variety of ways -- April 1, 2006; April 1, 06; 04/01/2006 or 4/1/06. The computer will convert each of these entries to: "04/01/2006"

Section 4.2 - Schedule A - Cash Contributions

This schedule is used to record those donations of money in cash, check or credit card. For more information on Schedule A please visit SBE's website.
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/General%20Laws/CFDA%20Summary/Web_Summary.htm#_Toc61847658

There are three ways you can get to the Enter Schedule A screen:

4. Click on **ADD DATA** → A: CASH CONTRIBUTIONS on the Menu.
5. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <A>.
6. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Cash Contributions.

Required Fields

The data entry screen (see Section 4.1) contains fields for all the information required by the State Board of Elections. VAFiling will not accept entries without all the necessary information. If you try to enter an incomplete contribution, a prompt will appear telling you what information is needed.

Occupation/Employer

For corporate and PAC contributors, the "Employer/Business" field should be left blank.

When entering donations from retirees, you can enter "Retired" in the OCCUPATION field and enter "n/a" in the EMPLOYER and PLACE OF BUSINESS field. The same can apply when entering donations from homemakers or students.

In an ideal world, candidates and committees would gather the occupation/employer information for each donor as the checks were received. SBE recognizes that in the real world checks arrived unsolicited or without occupation information requested. In some cases, you may receive donations be entering small-dollar donations from individuals and companies you know little about.

If the amount is more than $100, you must contact the donor to obtain the necessary information. If you cannot reach the donor, you should send the donor a letter explaining that you are required to provide their occupation/employer information and formally request the information from them. Copies of such letters, preferably in Microsoft Word, should be submitted with your report. (E-filers should attach copies of the letters in their email. Paper filers should include copies of the letters with their reports.)

If the amount from a donor whose occupation/employer is not known falls below $100, you can simply type an "N/A" in the "occupation", "employer" and "place of business fields." This "N/A" will serve as a placeholder if/until subsequent gifts lift the donor's aggregate over $100. At that time, you can do the research necessary to determine the donor's occupation, employer and city/state location of their employer. If you cannot reach the donor, you should send the donor a letter explaining that you are required to provide his occupation/employer information and formally request the information from him. Copies of such letters, preferably in Microsoft Word, should be submitted with your report. (E-filers should attach copies of the letters in their email. Paper filers should include copies of the letters with their reports.)

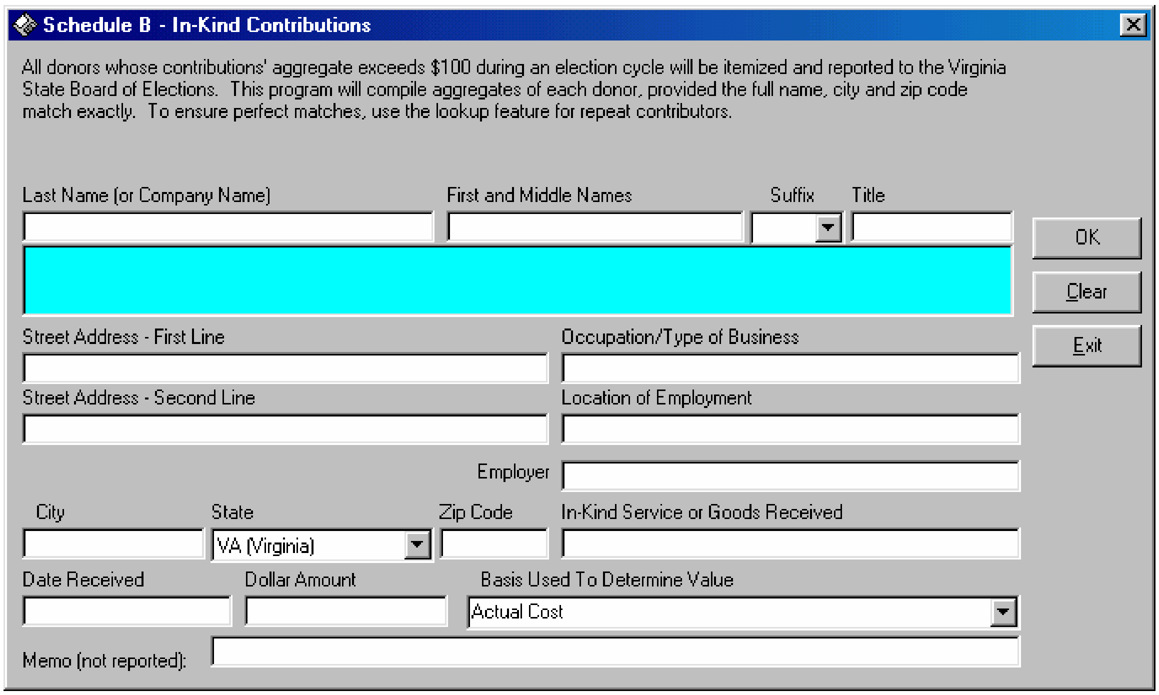
Best Practices: Please distinguish between a donor's "title" and "occupation." For example, the vice president of Roanoke Roofing Corp. should not have her occupation listed as "vice president." A better description would be "Roofing Contractor

Section 4.3 - Schedule B - In-Kind Contributions

This schedule is used to record donations of goods and services, such as free office space, flight across the state or office equipment.
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/General%20Laws/CFDA%20Summary/Web_Summary.htm#_Toc61847658

There are three ways you can get to the Enter Schedule B screen:

1. Click on **ADD DATA** → B: IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <B>.
3. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" In-Kind Contributions.



Required Fields

The data entry screen (displayed above) contains fields for all the information required for State Board of Elections reports. VAFiling will not accept entries without all the necessary information. If you try to enter an incomplete contribution, a prompt will appear telling you what information is needed.

Occupation/Employer

For corporate and PAC contributors, the "Employer/Business" field should be left blank.

When entering donations from retirees, you can enter “Retired” in the OCCUPATION field and enter “n/a” in the EMPLOYER and PLACE OF BUSINESS field. The same can apply when entering donations from homemakers or students.

In an ideal world, candidates and committees would gather the occupation/employer information for each donor as the checks were received. SBE recognizes that in the real world checks arrived unsolicited or without occupation information requested. In some cases, you may receive donations from individuals and companies you know little about.

If the amount is more than $100, you must contact the donor to obtain the necessary information. If you cannot reach the donor, you should the donor a letter explaining that you are required to provide his occupation/employer information and formally request the information from him. Copies of such letters, preferably in Microsoft Word, should be submitted with your report. (E-filers should attach copies of the letters in their email. Paper filers should include copies of the letters with their reports.)

If the amount from a donor whose occupation/employer is not known falls below $100, you can simply type an “N/A” in the “occupation”, “employer” and “place of business fields.” This “N/A” will serve as a placeholder if/until subsequent gifts lift the donor’s aggregate over $100. At that time, you can do the research necessary to determine the donor’s occupation, employer and city/state location of their employer. . If you cannot reach the donor, you should the donor a letter explaining that you are required to provide his occupation/employer information and formally request the information from him. Copies of such letters, preferably in Microsoft Word, should be submitted with your report. (E-filers should attach copies of the letters in their email. Paper filers should include copies of the letters with their reports.)

<u>Best Practices:</u> Please distinguish between a donor’s “title” and “occupation.” For example, the vice president of Roanoke Roofing Corp. should not have her occupation listed as “vice president.” A better description would be “Roofing Contractor.”

Section 4.4 -Aggregating Contributions

VAFiling automatically calculates the total amount of money that each contributor has given or loaned to a campaign during an election cycle. The aggregates are recalculated each time you add or edit a contribution record. Aggregate contributions are a running total, increasing after each contribution.

To ensure accuracy, keep these points in mind:

<u>Enter all Contributions for Election Cycle:</u> VAFiling calculates aggregates based on information entered into your database. If you do not enter all transactions, the software will not be able to calculate the proper aggregates.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

> *Candidates who began using VAFiling after the “Begin Date” of the current year/cycle must keypunch all donations dating to the start of the election cycle. The same is true for political committees who begin using the software after already having filed at least one report that covers part of the current year.*

<u>Aggregate Contributions is a combined total of Cash and In-Kind Donations:</u> Under state law, cash and in-kind donations are combined when determining a donor’s aggregate. If a donor has given both cash and services, make sure the name is entered exactly the same on both Schedules A and B. If there is any difference -- however slight -- the system will not combine the two types of contributions.

Standardize Donor Names/Addresses: VAFiling calculates aggregate contributions with a query that looks for exact matches in five fields: Last Name, First and Middle Names, Suffix, City, State and Zip. If you have two donors with exactly the same name and city/state/zip, the program will assume, erroneously, that two distinct people are the same individual.

Make sure you differentiate between father and son by assigning each of them a different suffix. In rare cases where two contributors have exactly the same name, you could differentiate them by spelling out the middle name of one contributor and using only the middle initial for the other.

You should establish some basic data-entry rules. For instance, you might want to establish a policy that donor names are written exactly as they appear on the checks. You might want to follow rules for abbreviating or not abbreviating certain common names like "Virginia." These rules will ensure donor names are standardized, particularly if more than one person performs the data entry.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Pay attention to address changes for donors and vendors. The same donor listed with different addresses will cause the donor's name to appear twice in the teal look-up window. When a donor or vendor's address changes, you click on VIEW/EDIT and select the appropriate schedule. The names will be listed in alphabetical order. Find all of the transactions for the donor/vendor in question. Change the address to the current address for all transactions.

Section 4.5 - Unitemized Contributions

In the days of paper reports, campaign workers had to keep two lists of givers -- those who gave enough to have their names listed on state reports and those who gave less $100 or less. VAFiling eliminates that bifurcated system.

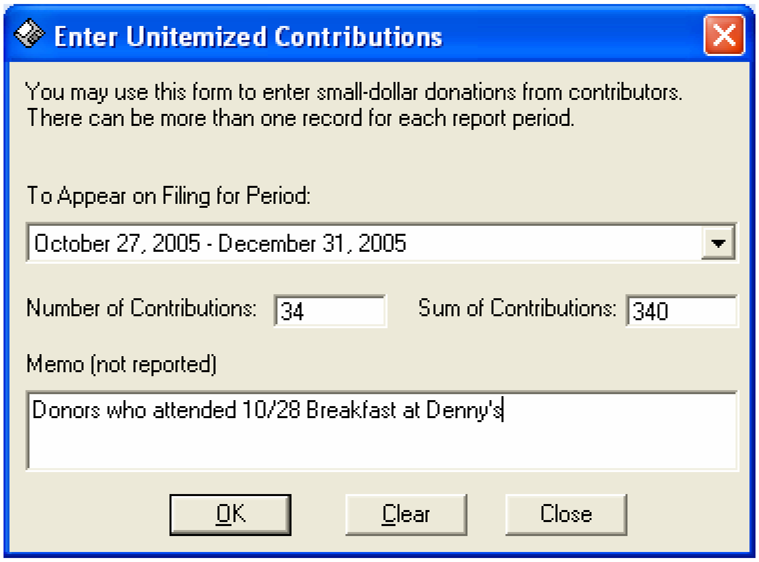
To take full advantage of VAFiling, your campaign should enter all contributions into the Schedule A and Schedule B forms, even those that fall below the itemization level of $100. This may involve more work in the short-term, but save time and help ensure accuracy in the long-term.

However, there are special circumstances where campaigns receive small-dollar checks from a large number of donors who have not and are unlikely to give more than $100 during the election cycle (for candidates) or during the current year (for political committees). VAFiling gives campaigns the flexibility of entering small-dollar donations with no names attached.

Note: The State Board of Elections requires campaigns to keep records with the identity of every contributor, even those who gave small amounts. If you have not recorded this information in VAFiling, you must keep it elsewhere so that if any of the donors later break the threshold their names can be entered in Schedule A and/or Schedule B.

To access this function, chose one of three routes:

1. Click on **ADD DATA** → UNITEMIZED CONTIBUTIONS on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Unitemized Contributions.



Step 1: Select the reporting period when the contributions were received.

Step 2: Enter the Total Number of Contributions and Total Amount of Contributions

Step 3: In the Memo field, make a notation to keep track of the source of the small dollar donations.

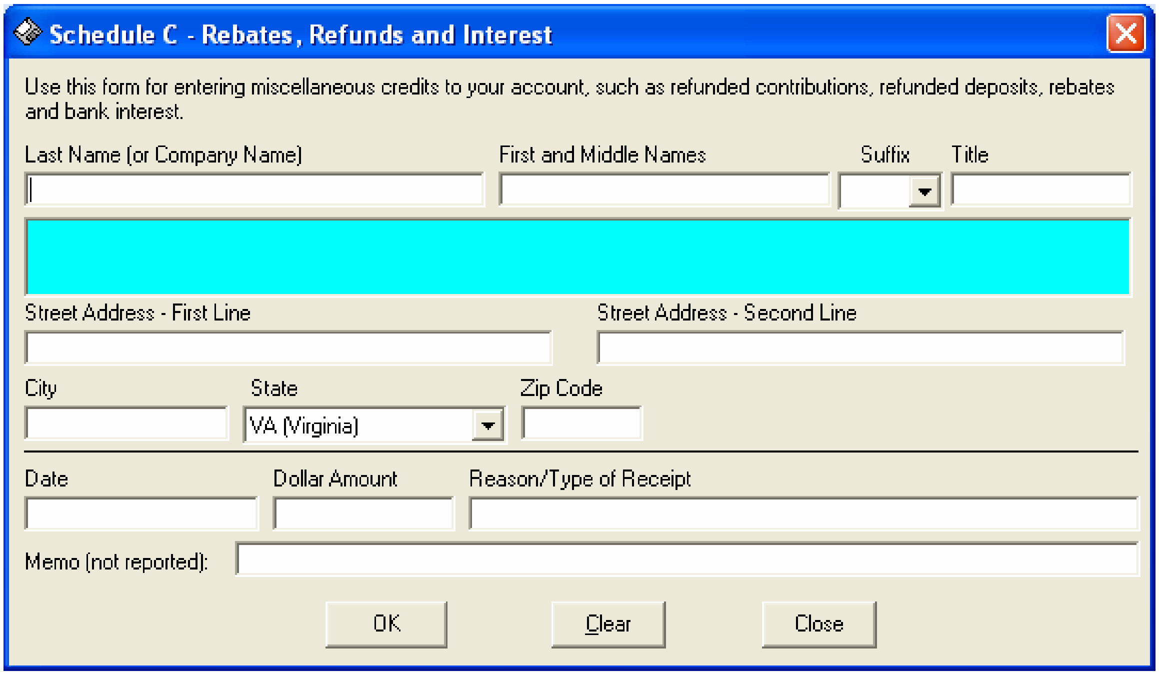
Step 4: To save the contribution, click OK.

Section 4.6 - Schedule C - Rebates, Refunds & Interest

This schedule is used to record miscellaneous income – interest earned on bank deposits and expenditures previously recorded in Schedule D that were later rebated or refunded. The schedule is also used to record when a committee receives repayment of a loan made to another candidate.

To access this function, chose one of three routes:

1. Click on **ADD DATA** → C: REBATES REFUNDS & INTEREST on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <C>.
3. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Rebates Refunds Interest.

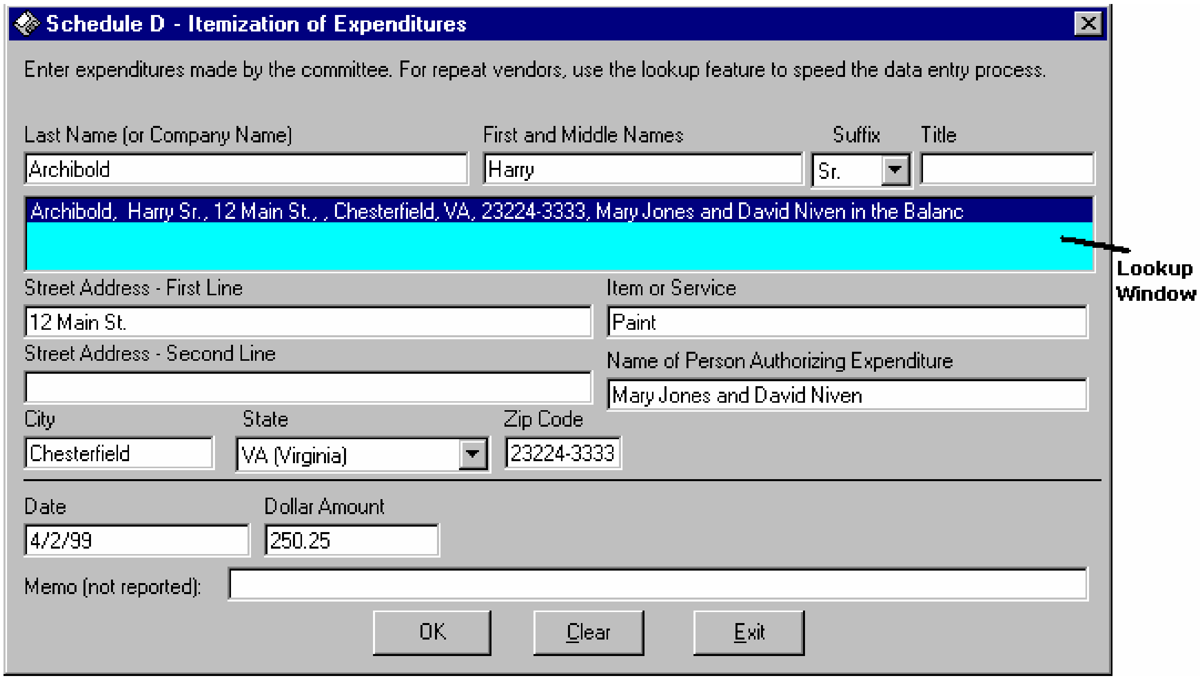


Section 4.7 - Schedule D – Expenditures

This schedule is used to record expenditures made from the campaign treasury. The only exception is checks written to repay loans, which are entered on Schedule E.

<u>To access this function, chose one of three routes:</u>

4. Click on **<u>A</u>DD DATA** → <u>D</u>: EXPENDITURES on the Menu.
5. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <D>.
6. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Expenditures.



<u>Best Practices</u>: When describing the purpose of an expense, try to avoid vague or general descriptions. For example, instead of simply listing “Reimbursement” provide more specifics such as “Reimbursement for Cell Phone.”

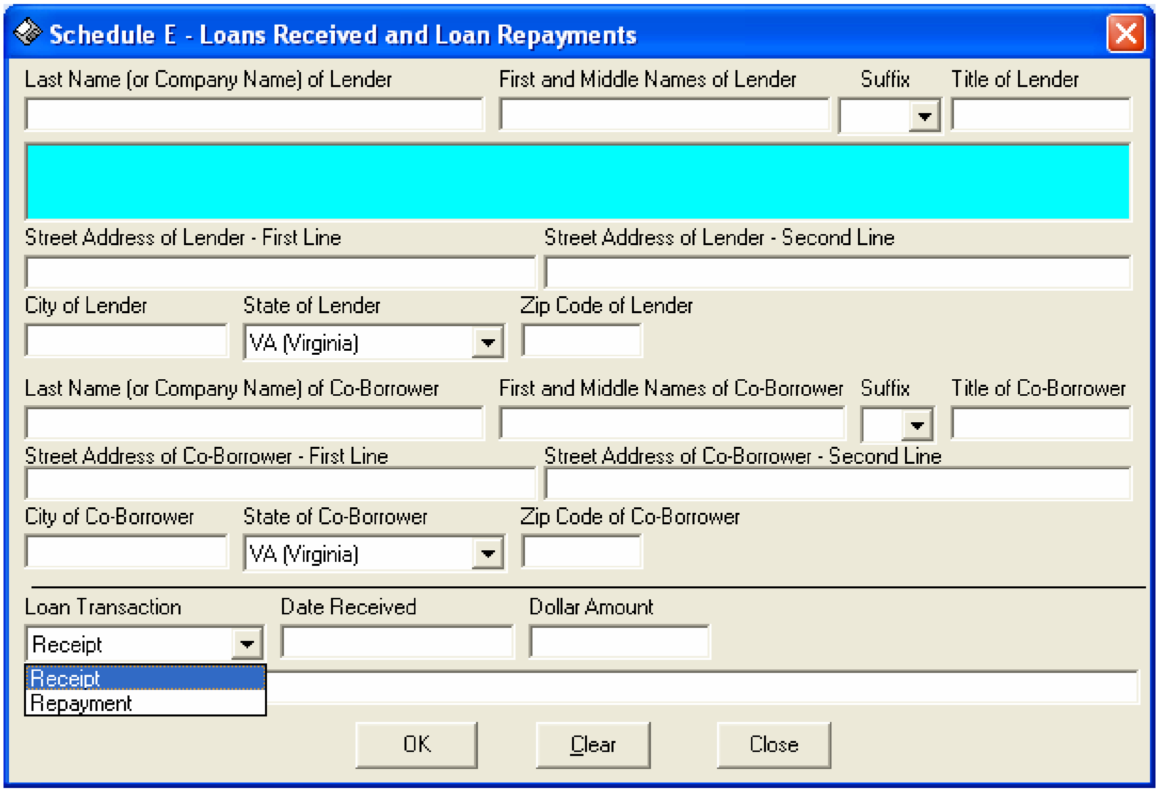
<u>Best Practices</u>: Virginia law requires that all credit card expenses be itemized. http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/General%20Laws/CFDA%20Summary/Web_Summary.htm#_Toc61847659

Section 4.8 - Schedule E – Loans

This schedule is used to record loans received by the campaign and the campaign’s repayment of loans. The two different transactions are entered the same way with one exception – the LOAN TRANSACTION drop-down menu in the bottom left corner of the screen.

<u>To access this function, chose one of three routes:</u>

1. Click on **ADD DATA** → E: LOANS on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <E>.
3. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Loans (Contributions - - For Loans Receive) and (Disbursements - for Loans Repaid).



Note: Pay close attention to the “Loan Transaction” box in the lower left corner. Select “Receipt” when entering a loan received by the campaign. Select “Repayment” when entering the repayment of a previous loan.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

An outstanding loan balance is considered an unpaid debt. VAFiling does not automatically transfer loan balances to the debt schedule. Therefore, all outstanding loan balances must also be entered in Schedule F – Debts Remaining Unpaid.

Section 4.9 - Schedule F - Debts Remaining Unpaid

This schedule is used to record outstanding loan balances and any other obligations that remain unpaid at the close of a reporting period.

Important Note: For all other schedules, VAFiling generates disclosure reports by querying the data for transactions that fall within specific dates. This date-specific query does not work with debts, because an obligation can be incurred before the current reporting period.

As a result, VAFiling is programmed to include all data in Schedule F in the disclosure reports, regardless of date. <u>You must delete each record in Schedule F once the obligation has been satisfied.</u> Failure to delete satisfied obligations will cause them to continue to appear on future reports.

<u>To access this function, chose one of three routes:</u>

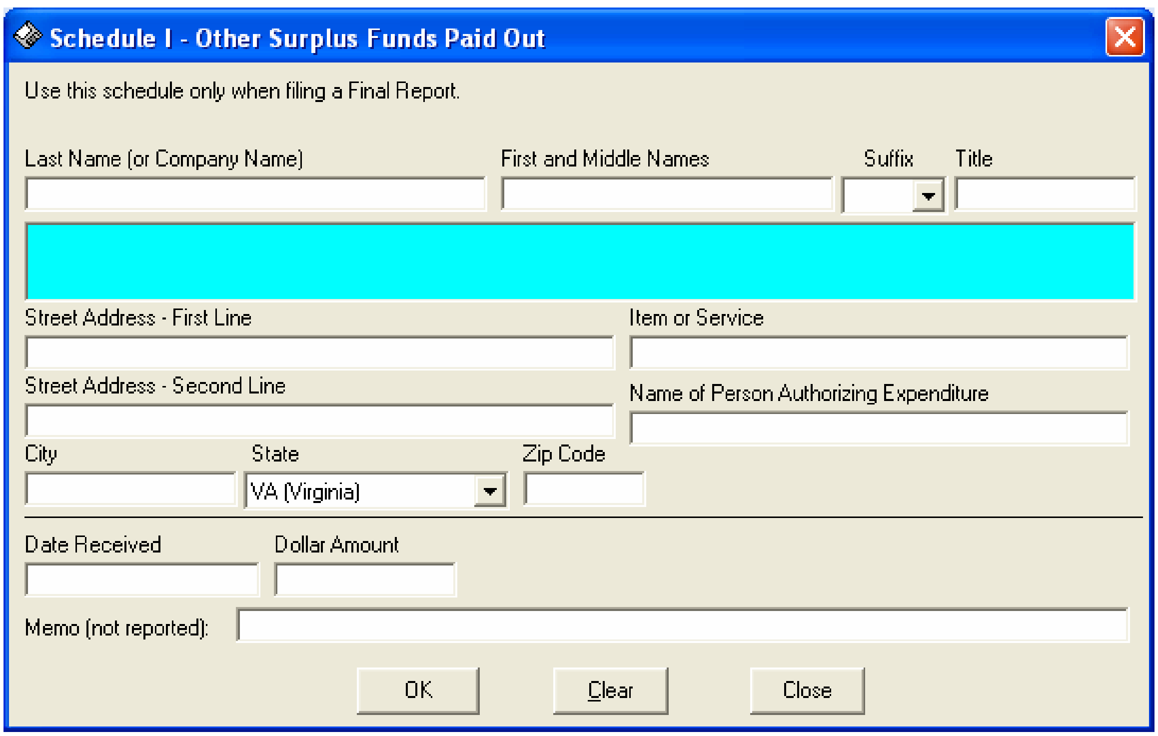
1. Click on **ADD DATA** → F: DEBTS REMAINING UNPAID on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <F>.
3. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Outstanding Debts.

Section 4.10 - Schedule I - Other Surplus Funds Paid Out

This schedule is used to record the disposition of surplus committee funds. Schedule I is used only when filing a FINAL report closing out your account with the State Board of Elections.

<u>To access this function, chose one of three routes:</u>

1. Click on **ADD DATA** → I: OTHER SURPLUS FUNDS PAID OUT on the Menu.
2. Press <Alt><A> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <I>.
3. Press <Alt><J> on your keyboard to display the Jump! menu. Click on "Add" Surplus Funds.



Section 5: REVIEWING, EDITING, AND DELETING DATA

After entering data, it's a good policy to review for accuracy/completeness and make any necessary changes. VAFiling provides two options for reviewing your work: By printing out transactions on each schedule and by viewing the transactions on screen.
In addition, VAFiling users who have a licensed copy of Microsoft Access have the ability to export the data to other formats, where it can be reviewed.

Section 5.1- Printing Paper Reports

The State Board of Elections recommends that all users – even e-filers – print and save a paper copy of each disclosure report. This will give you a hard copy for your files and a ready reference for subsequent reports.

You can use these paper reports to check for accuracy, particularly the summary pages. Make sure that the beginning balance of your current report matches the ending balance of your most recent report. Failure to reconcile these balances will make it extremely difficult to reconcile your account at the end of a campaign or end of the calendar year.

Note: The current version of VAFiling does not generate a cover sheet. These can be downloaded from the State Board of Elections web site:

Candidates:

http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Forms/2004_Candidate_Cover.pdf

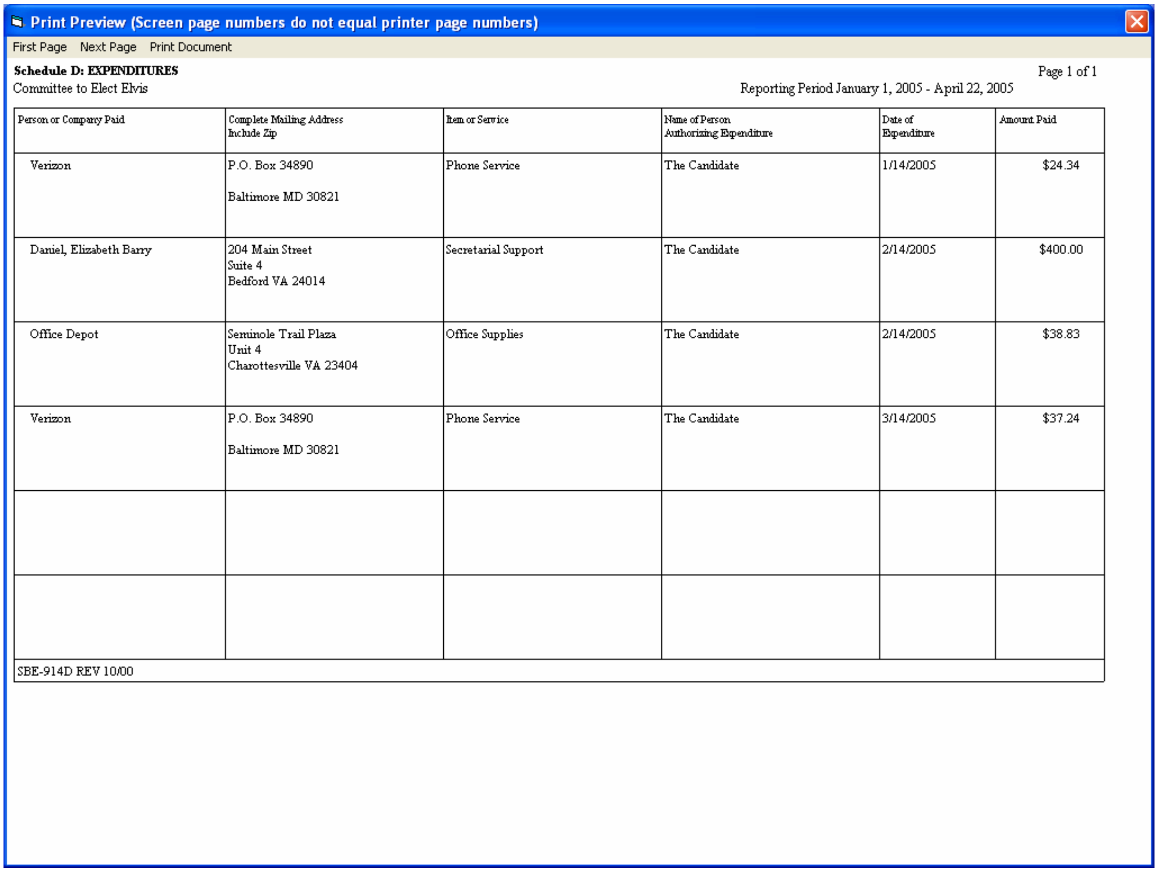
Political Committees:

http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Forms/2004_PAC_Cover_.pdf

To print a Schedule, follow these steps:

Step 1: Make sure the "Filing Period" selected in the PROFILE is the period you would like to print.

Step 2: Click on PREPARE C&E REPORT and select the appropriate schedule. This will open a view box like the one for Schedule D shown below:


Print Preview (Screen page numbers do not equal printer page numbers)

First Page Next Page Print Document

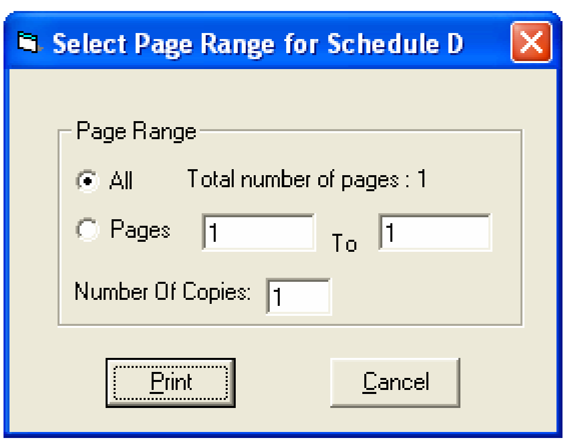
Schedule D: EXPENDITURES Page 1 of 1

Committee to Elect Elvis Reporting Period January 1, 2005 - April 22, 2005

Person or Company Paid	Complete Mailing Address Include Zip	Item or Service	Name of Person Authorizing Expenditure	Date of Expenditure	Amount Paid
Verizon	P.O. Box 34890 Baltimore MD 30821	Phone Service	The Candidate	1/14/2005	$24.34
Daniel, Elizabeth Barry	204 Main Street Suite 4 Bedford VA 24014	Secretarial Support	The Candidate	2/14/2005	$400.00
Office Depot	Seminole Trail Plaza Unit 4 Charottesville VA 23404	Office Supplies	The Candidate	2/14/2005	$38.83
Verizon	P.O. Box 34890 Baltimore MD 30821	Phone Service	The Candidate	3/14/2005	$37.24

SBE-914D REV 10/00

Step 3: Click “PRINT DOCUMENT” in the upper left corner. This will open a screen shown below.



Step 4: Select range of pages desired and number of copies of each page. Click PRINT.

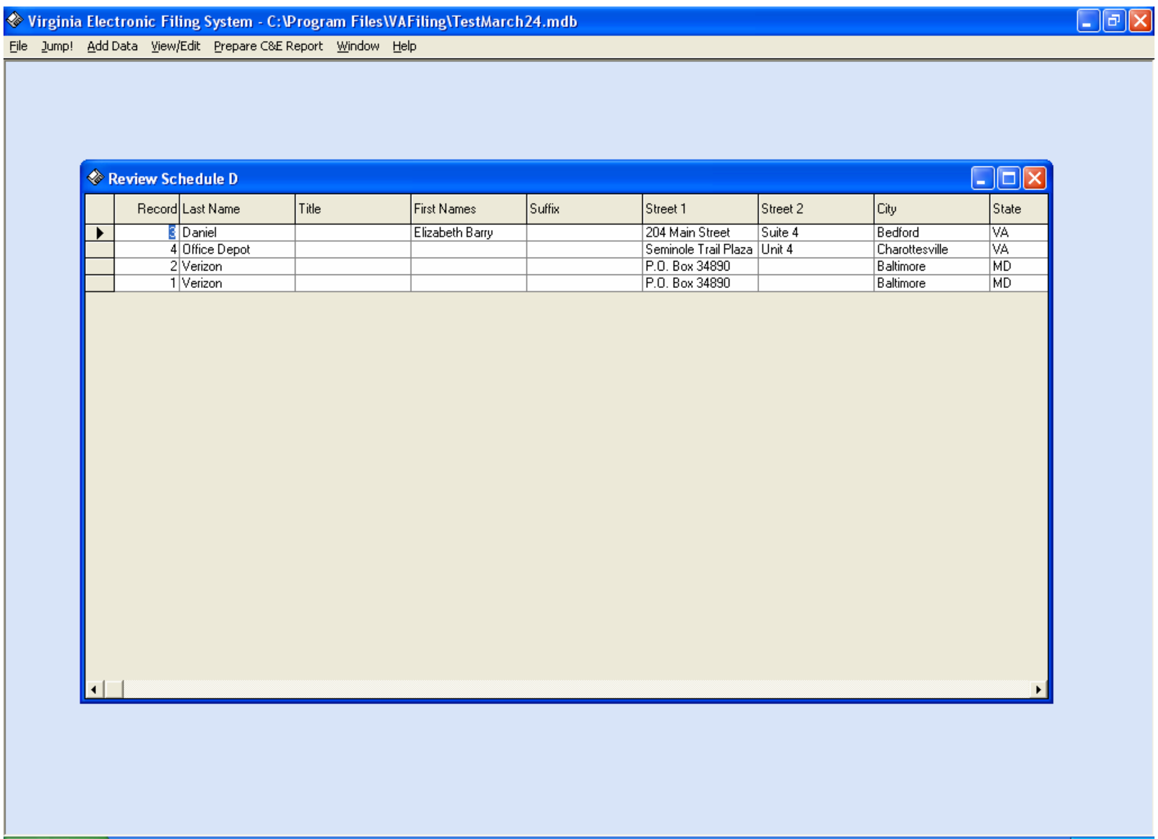
Step 5: You will see a prompt that says "Print Complete." Click OK.

**** VAFiling Tip ****

Those candidates who are filing paper reports should file only those schedules for which there are transactions during the period. There is no need to include blank schedules. For example, you should not include a blank copy of Schedule B if your campaign received no in-kind gifts during the period. In fact, VAFiling will not print schedules for which there is no data.

Section 5.2 - On-Screen Viewing

VAFiling allows you to view transactions on the screen. The records show each schedule displayed in a grid, listed alphabetically by last name. An example of the grid view for Schedule A is shown below:



Maneuvering on the Screen:

The view grid contains more fields (or vertical columns) than can fit on the screen, left to right. Click on the box in the upper right corner to expand the screen and show as many fields as possible.

To browse the fields from left to right, use the navigation bar at the bottom of the screen. To move the curser across the grid, click into a cell and use the directional arrow keys on your keyboard, located between your main keyboard and the number pad.

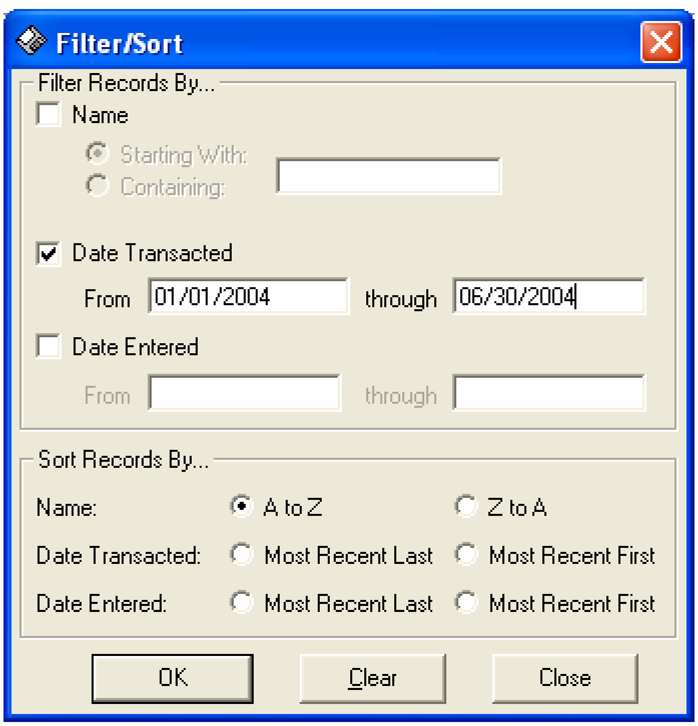
If part of the information is cut off because the column length is too narrow, move the curser to the column heading and place the curser on the vertical lines separating the fields. Your cursor will change shape, forming a dark vertical line with arrows pointing left and right. Click and drag the column to desired width.

Section 5.3 - Filtering/Sorting Data

Over time, the number of transactions will grow to the point where it is difficult to find a particular transaction by simply viewing a schedule. VAFiling allows you to filter the view so that you see only those records you select, according to one or more criteria.

Step 1: Open a view by clicking on VIEW/EDIT and selecting a Schedule.

Step 2: While the view is open, click on VIEW/EDIT → FILTER/SORT. This will open the screen shown below:



Step 3: Select one or more Filter Options by clicking on one or more of the options:

Name: Click on the NAME box. Next, choose whether to limit the filter to (a) those whose LAST names begin with a letter or word or (b) those whose LAST names contain a string of letters anywhere within the name. (If you typed “Medical” in this second option, you’d get names like “Virginia Medical PAC” and “Medical Outcomes Inc.” etc.)

Date Transacted: Click on the checkmark box to limit transactions that fell within a particular date range. This option is particularly helpful in reviewing transactions for a particular reporting period.

Date Entered: Click on the checkmark box to limit search to transactions keyed within specific date range. This option is helpful in reviewing work entered on a particular day.

Step 4: You may choose to select to sort the results in one of six ways:

- Last Name (A-Z)
- Last Name (Z-A)
- Date Transacted (Most Recent Last)
- Date Transacted (Most Recent First)
- Date Entered (Most Recent Last)
- Date Entered (Most Recent First)

Step 5: Click OK.

Section 5.4 - Editing Data

There are two ways you can change or correct information entered into your database. Open the grid for the selected schedule (VIEW/EDIT → SCHEDULE _). Once you find a record you wish to amend, you can use one of these two steps:

Editing in the Grid: Click into a cell of the targeted record and navigate to the column in which the information needs editing. Make changes. Close the grid.

Editing in the Schedule Form: Highlight a record in the grid and double-click on the black triangle in the shaded area on the far left border. This will take you to the Form, where the information can be edited. Click the EDIT button.

Section 5.5 - Deleting Data

You can delete an entire record of information, one record at a time.

Step 1: Open the grid for a selected schedule (VIEW/EDIT → SCHEDULE _).

Step 2: Highlight the selected transaction by clicking the shaded area on the far left border. The entire record will be highlighted in blue.

Step 3: Press the "Delete" key on your keyboard.

Step 4: A prompt will ask, "Do you want to delete the selected record?" Click "Yes" and then "OK."

Section 6: PREPARING DISCLOSURE REPORTS

VAFiling generates the disclosure reports that committees and candidates must submit to the State Board of Elections. Most candidates must report twice a year in non-election years and seven times a year during election years. Political committees must report twice a year, with additional pre-election reports required for those committees that donate prescribed amounts to candidates running in the election.

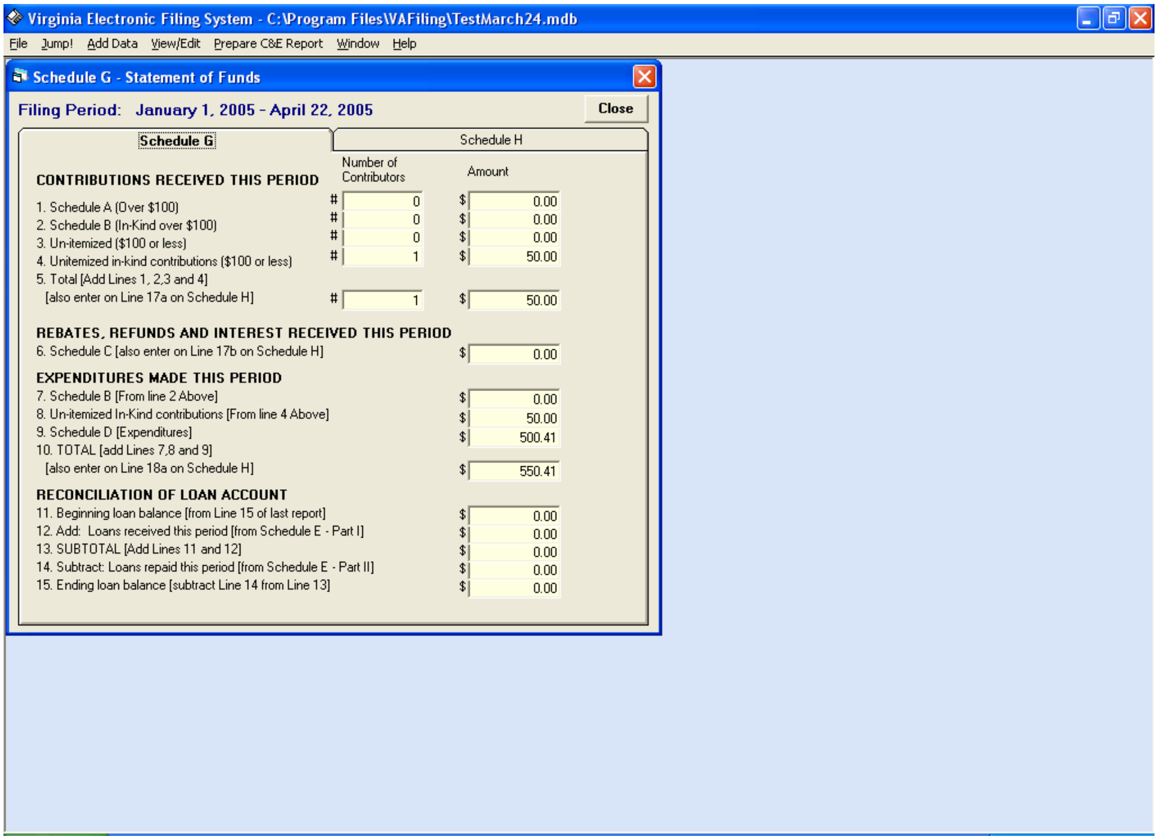
Section 6.1 -Schedule G Statement of Funds

Schedule G provides a summary of transactions – contributions, expenditures, loans, etc. – that occurred within a filing period. To select a particular filing period, go to VIEW/EDIT → PROFILE and, in the bottom right corner, choose from the pull-down menu labeled “Filing Period.”

The numbers on Schedule G cannot be changed on the screen. The numbers on each line are generated by transactions entered in the other schedules that have been entered for the filing period. For instructions on making changes, see section 6.3 below.

To access Schedule G, choose one of three routes:

- On the navigation bar, click VIEW/EDIT → SCHEDULE G STATEMENT OF FUNDS
- Press <Alt><V> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <G>.
- On the navigation bar, click JUMP! and, on the resulting screen, click "REVIEW CFDA SUMMARY".



The numbers on Schedule G cannot be changed on the screen. The numbers are generated by transactions entered in the other schedules. For instance, if you entered 5 cash donations of $200 each during the period, Line 1 will show "5" contributions valued at total of "$2,000"

The one exception to this rule is Line 11: Beginning Loan Balance. This number is determined by the Preset Values, which is discussed in detail in Section 2.9. The Beginning Loan Balance is generated automatically from your most recent report. If the number on Line 11 is in error, you can change it manually by going to ADD DATA → PRESET VALUES.

**** VAFiling Tips ****

In-Kind Gifts are listed as both contributions (Lines 2 and 4) and expenditures (Lines 7 and 8). Counting in-kinds both ways is the only way to make accounts balance. Think of it this way: If you were to buy a computer, someone would have to donate the money (shown as a contribution) and then you'd have to buy a computer (shown as an expense). Without in-kinds counting also as expenses, a donated *computer valued at $1,000 would make it appear the campaign had money which it could never spend.*

Beginning Loan Balance are determine by "Preset Values," which are explained in detail in Section 2.9

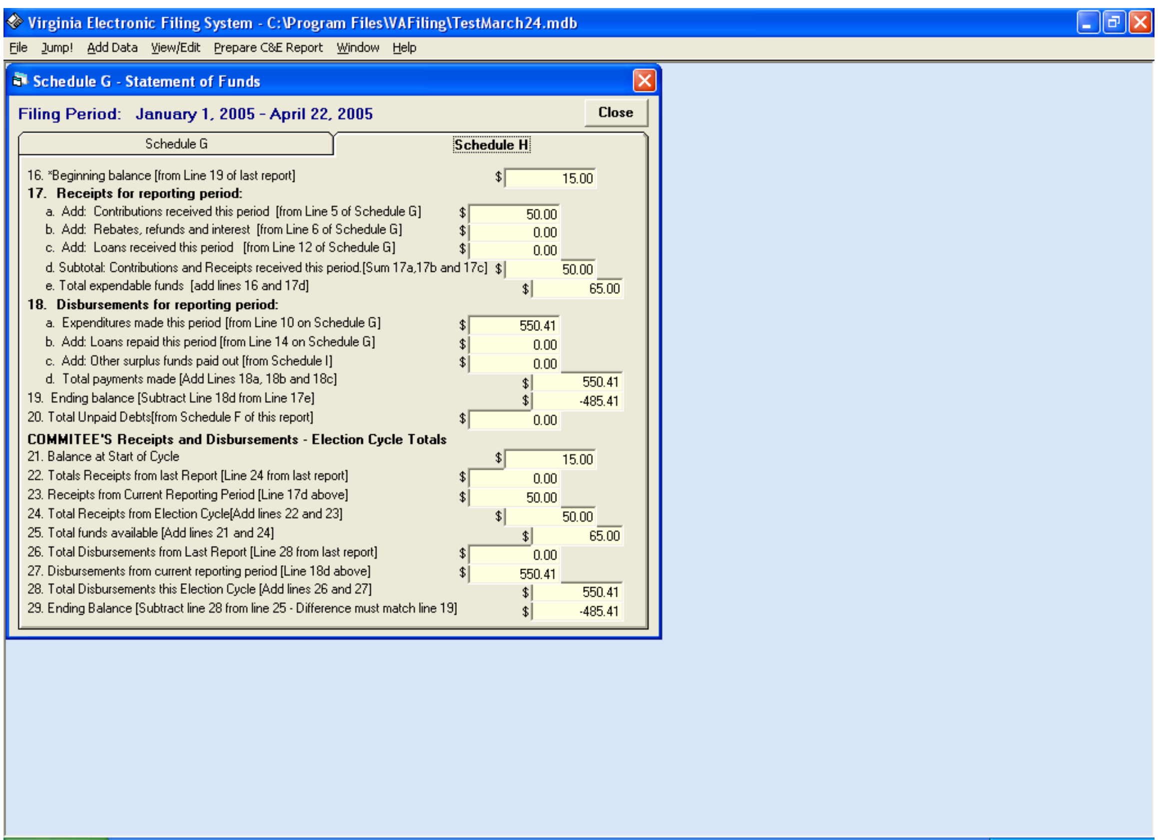
Section 6.2 -Schedule H Summary of Receipts/ Disbursements

Schedule H provides a starting and ending balance for the filing period and a running total of receipts and expenditures since the start of the election cycle (candidates) or the calendar year (political committees.)

The numbers on Schedule H cannot be changed on the screen. The numbers on each line are generated by transactions entered in the other schedules that have been entered for the filing period. For instructions on making changes, see section 6.3 below.

To access Schedule G, chose one of three routes:

- On the navigation bar, click VIEW/EDIT → SCHEDULE H: SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
- Press <Alt><V> on your keyboard to display the drop down menu. Then press <H>.
- On the navigation bar, click JUMP! and, on the resulting screen, click "REVIEW CFDA SUMMARY" and click to the "Schedule H" tab.



The top portion of Schedule H provides an account balance at the start of the filing period and, after the addition of new revenue and subtraction of expenditures, an account balance at the end of the filing period.

The bottom portion of Schedule H was redesigned in 2004 to comply with changes to the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act. The key change was a requirement that each candidate and committee provide a “Balance at Start of Cycle.” (Please see Section 2.10 for a complete discussion of this number.)

The redesigned Schedule H makes it easier for candidates and committees to reconcile its ending balance. Line 19 (Ending Balance) should equal Line 29 (Ending Balance.)
The numbers on Schedule H cannot be changed on the screen. The numbers are generated by transactions entered in the other schedules and four numbers determined by Preset Values, which is discussed in detail in Section 2.9. These Preset Values are:

- Line 16: Beginning Balance
- Line 21: Balance at Start of Cycle
- Line 22: Total Receipts from Last Report
- Line 27: Total Disbursements from Last Report

The numbers above will be generated automatically from your most recent report. If any of the numbers are incorrect, you can change them manually by going to ADD DATA → PRESET VALUES.

**** VAFiling Tips ****

Total Unpaid Debts (Line 20) should include all unpaid loan balances. Line 20 is determined by the value of entries on Schedule F: Debts Remaining Unpaid. Once a debt is repaid, the entry should be deleted from Schedule F. (See Section 4.9)

Section 6.3 - Reconciling Summary Numbers

The State Board of Elections recommends that treasurers preparing Schedule H take great care to ensure that Line 19 = Line 29. Failure to do so could cause the SBE to reject your report. Furthermore, allowing your account to get out of balance will only postpone a much more painful reckoning when the time comes to turn the duties over to a new treasurer or close out your account.

Below are some suggested approaches to make sure your reports are complete and accurate:

Maintain Copies of Financial Records

Enter all checks written into a register and make photocopies of all checks received. These records will be invaluable if you need to double-check figures for a filing period.

Print Copies of Each Schedule

After entering all transactions (contributions, expenditures, loans, etc.) for a filing period, you should print out a copy of all schedules involved. Many people find it easier to review work on paper rather than on the screen. For Printing instructions, see Section 5.1.

Compare the amount of each transaction entered in VAFiling with your financial records. Make sure no transactions are missing or double-entered. To amend or delete records, see Section 5.

If your candidate/committee has a large number of small donors that would not normally show up on

Schedule A or B, you might want to reset the “itemization threshold” so that these contribution schedules print all transactions, regardless of the amount. Click on VIEW/EDIT -> PROFILE and under “Itemization Threshold” click on the button for “Itemize All Contributions.”

Note: After you print, make sure to reset the Itemization Threshold to “Itemize if Aggregate is over $100” before preparing your report for the State Board of Elections.

Troubleshooting

Problem: The starting balance – Schedule H, Line 16 – is incorrect. How do I change it?

Solution: Line 16 is one of five numbers that come from what are known as “Preset Values” that in most instances are generated automatically. You may amend these numbers manually by changing the Preset Values. (See Section 2.9) The Preset Values are:

Line 11: Beginning Loan Balance
Line 16: Beginning Balance
Line 21: Balance at Start of Election Cycle
Line 23: Receipts from Current Reporting Cycle
Line 26: Disbursements from Current Reporting Cycle

Problem: I can see a donation in Schedule A in my database, but it’s not reflected in the summary nor does it appear on the printed version of Schedule A.

Solution: Double-check the date. Chances are there was a typo that put the date outside the reporting period.

Problem: The campaign paid off all its debts, but Schedule H, Line 20 continues to show outstanding obligations of $5,200. How can I make it reflect the correct number, zero?

Solution: As soon as you pay off a debt, you should delete the record from Schedule F. This is the only schedule that is not date-dependent. That is because debts usually are incurred in the past, before the current filing period began. As a result, any record in Schedule F will be tallied on the amount shown on Line 20. The answer is: delete the record(s) from Schedule F by going to VIEW/EDIT → SCHEDULE F. Highlight one record at a time and press the “Delete” key on your keyboard.

Section 6.4 - Creating Electronic Reports

Your VAFiling database will generate electronic reports that can be emailed to the State Board of Elections. The format of these reports is comma-delimited text (.txt). These reports contain the same information shown in the printed format, including only reportable transactions during the period and the summary information.

You will create a new electronic report (.txt file) for each reporting period. For most candidates and committees, these files will be very small, usually less than 10 KB.

<u>Steps to Create an Electronic Report</u>

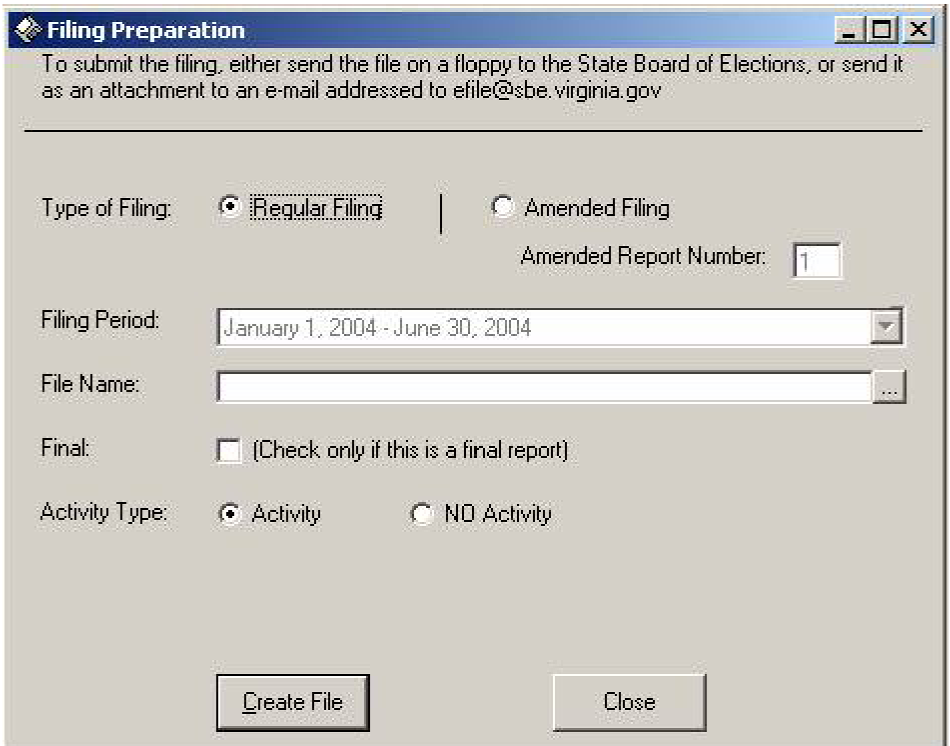
Step 1: Review all Schedules to confirm report is correct.

Step 2: Review your PROFILE to make sure you have entered your treasurer’s name, candidate or committee’s ID Number and six-digit Security Code. The State Board of Elections cannot accept your report without these numbers. (If you need these numbers, contact the SBE Campaign Finance Section at 804-864-8901 or Toll-Free at 800.552.9745.)

**** VAFiling Tips ****

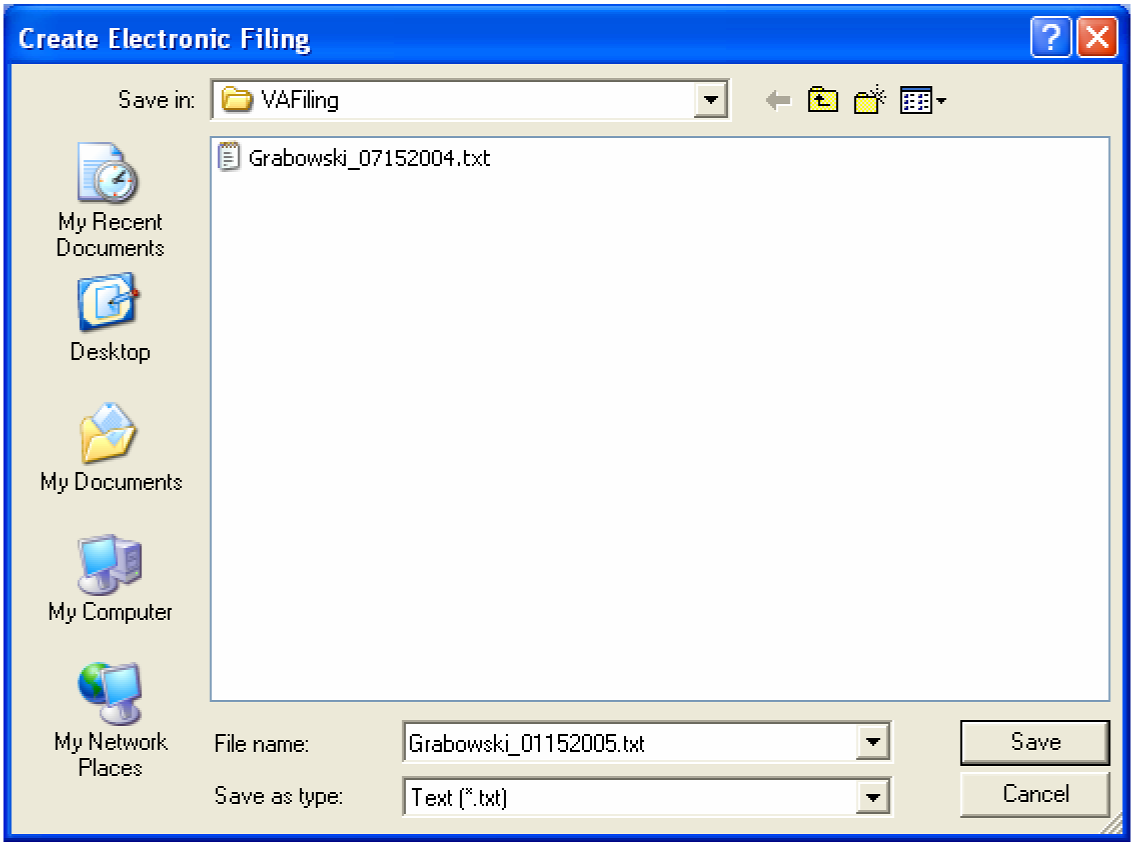
Political committees should drop the "VA" from their ID number. For example, a political committee with the ID "VA02-012" should list the ID as "02-012"

Step 3: On the menu bar, click on "Prepare C & E Report" → "Prepare Electronic File" This will lead to the dialogue box for Filing Preparation:



Step 4: Double-check that the Filing Period, shown in light script, is correct. (To change this selection, click on "Exit." Then, click on VIEW/EDIT → PROFILE. Select the appropriate period in the drop-down box and repeat Steps 3 and 4.)

Step 5: Select a file name by clicking on the small box to the far right of the "File Name" line. This will lead you to the dialogue box shown below.



SBE requests that you name your file in a standard way:

Candidates must use their last name followed by the report's due date. For example, "The Committee to Re-elect Karp" would label its report due January 15, 2006 as **"Karp_01152006.txt".** If the January 15, 2005 report is amended, the first amendment would be called "**Karp_01152006_A1.txt" ".** If your report must be amended more than once then you will change the **A1** to **A2, A3,** etc. (Candidates with common last names should also include their first initial. "Friends of Paul Jones" would start with "JonesP…")

Political Committees must name their files with your Committee ID# (dropping the VA and the hyphen) followed by the report's due date. For example, "XYZ-PAC" whose Committee ID is VA – 05-250 would name their January 15, 2006 report as **"05250_01152006.txt".** If the January 15, 2006 report is amended, the file name would be **"05250_01152006_A1.txt".** If it must be amended more than once then you will change the **A1** to **A2, A3,** etc.

Step 6: Select whether the file will be the original for the reporting period (Regular Filing) or an Amended Filing of a report previously filed with the State Board of Elections. If it is an amended report, enter the "Amended Report Number." The first amended report should be "1" and so forth.

**** VAFiling Tips ****

Final Reports must show no outstanding loans and show an ending balance of Zero. Electronic Filers also must submit a one-page paper cover sheet certifying the account is to be closed. A copy of the cover sheet can be downloaded from the SBE Web site:
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Forms/default.htm

The forms should be signed by the candidate or appropriate officer and mailed to: Campaign Finance Division, Virginia State Board of Elections, Suite 101, 200 North 9th Street, Richmond, VA 23219-3485
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/General%20Laws/CFDA%20Summary/Web_Summary.htm#_Toc61847630

Step 7: If there is no activity during the period other bank interest or fees, click on the "NO Activity" button. (Check with Policy to determine how to handle for e-filers.)

Step 8: Click the "Create File" button. You will get a prompt that says, "File Created Successfully." Click OK.

Section 6.5 - E-Filing Campaign Reports

Once you have created an e-report (.txt file) for a specific reporting period, the final step is to e-mail the file as an attachment to State Board of Elections.

E-Filing is mandatory for all statewide candidates and for any political committee that anticipates raising or spending at least $10,000 during a calendar year. Click here to see rules for political committees:
http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+24.2-914.1

At this writing, E-Filing remains optional for General Assembly candidates. There are several advantages to e-filing:

- General Assembly candidates who e-file with the State Board of Elections are relieved of the obligation to file a duplicate copy with their local voter registrar.
- E-Filers save taxpayers' money. SBE must pay a vendor to keypunch paper reports filed by General Assembly candidates.

E-Filing is not available to local candidates, who must continue to file on paper. However, local candidates can still use VAFiling to produce their reports. All local electoral boards accept the VAFiling paper format.

Follow the steps below to e-file with the State Board of Elections:

Step 1: Connect to the Internet and open your mail program. (Note: Email sent through Web browsers is not accepted. See "Tip" below.) Create a new message to: efile@sbe.virginia.gov

**** VAFiling Tips ****

Please note that emailing will not work with Hotmail or other email sent through a Web browser. Such browser-generated email will corrupt a file and cause it to be unreadable by the State Board of Elections' computer. Please send all attached .txt files through computer-based software such as Outlook, Eudora or AOL.

Step 2: SBE requests that you enter the following information in the subject line of your email:

1) Name of Committee
2) Report Due Date
3) Whether it is a regular filing or an amendment to a previous filing.

For example, “The Committee to Elect Elvis” would write in their subject line **“Committee to Elect Elvis, January 15, 2005, Amended”**

Step 3: Attach the correct .txt file, which can be found in this folder: c:\Program Files\VAFiling. Each mail program has a different way to attach a file. It's generally an option under the Message menu or an icon of a paperclip. (Do NOT copy the contents of the .txt file into the body of the email message).

**** VAFiling Tips ****

After a while, you will have several .txt files in your folder. Be careful to attach the correct file.

Step 4: Send the email. You will receive an automated reply acknowledging that SBE has received the email. If there are any problems with your report, SBE’s staff will contact you in the future.

Note: Make sure to retain a copy of your outgoing email and the SBE acknowledgment, in case there are any questions about the timeliness of your report.

Section 7: MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

This section will explain important issues such as protecting your data from catastrophic computer failures to incorporating VAFiling in your overall data management.

Section 7.1 - Creating New Filing Periods

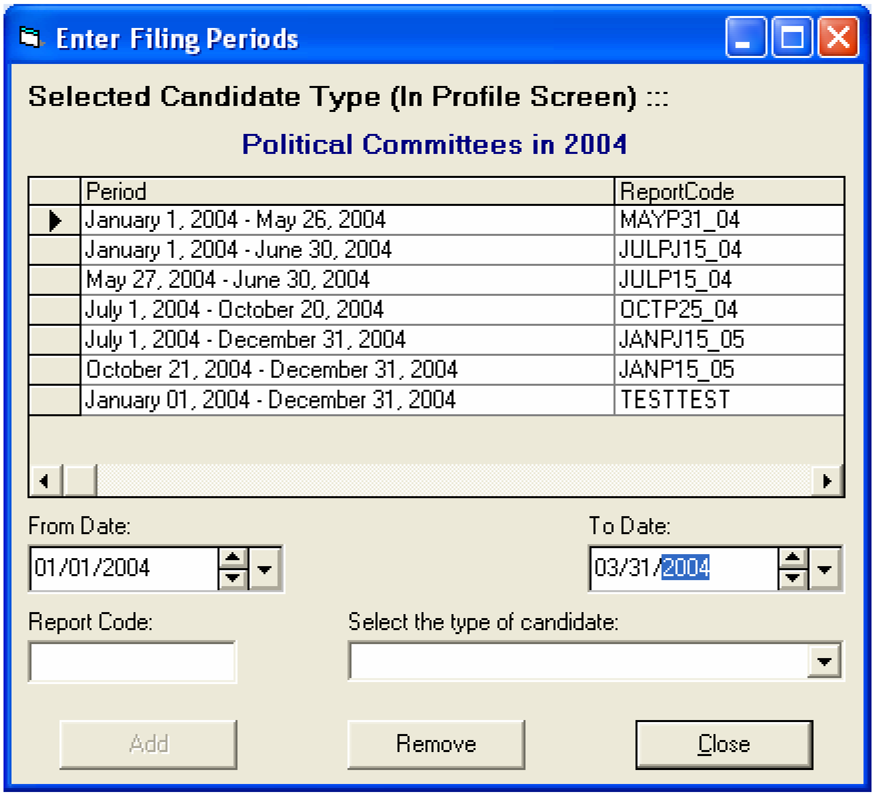
Version 3.0 is loaded with all the reporting periods that the State Board of Elections has scheduled for political committees and candidates through 2005. There are circumstances that will require some users to create a new filing period that was not included in Version 3.0. These circumstances include special elections and candidates who want to examine transactions that fall within a period of time other than a standard SBE filing period.

Follow the steps below to Create New Filing Periods

Step 1: Open the Profile (VIEW/EDIT → PROFILE) and determine if you have the correct "Type of Candidate" selected.

Note: Candidates running in special elections should select "All Others"

Step 2: Click on ADD DATA → ADD NEW FILING PERIODS. You will see a dialogue box as shown below:



Step 3: Enter the first day of the period in the field under "From Date."

Step 4: Enter the last day of the period in the field under "To Date."

Step 5: Select the "Type of Candidate" from the drop-down box.

Step 6: Enter a "Report Code" from the specified SBE list. **http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/report_codes.htm.** If you are creating a report code for internal use only, the code can be any combination of 8-10 characters.

Step 7: Click ADD

**** VAFiling Tips ****

To Delete a filing period, highlight a period shown in the grid and click the REMOVE button.

Section 7.2 -Protecting Your Data

Computers can malfunction, causing a catastrophic loss of data. Imagine if you tried to boot up your computer this morning, only to discover that all of your files had vanished or had been corrupted by a virus. Each year, several candidates and committees lose their data because their treasurers ignored repeated warnings to take steps to back up their VAFiling databases.

The State Board of Elections strongly urges you regularly to back up your VAFiling database as part of an overall strategy to protect your computer information. You should back up your VAFiling database after each session in which you add or amend data.

A simple 3x5 floppy is not adequate; most VAFiling database (.mdb) files are too large that fit on the capacity of a floppy disk. Here are several options you should consider:

- If your computer is on a network, copy the files to a designated folder on your network drive each time you add or amend data.
- If your computer has a zip drive, copy the files to a 100- or 250-MB disk each time you add or amend data.
- If your computer has a read/write CD Rom, burn a copy of your database (.mdb file) each time you enter data or amend data.
- Use compression software (such as WinZip) to enable you to fit your VAFiling databases on a 3x5 floppy disk.

If your hardware options do not include any of the above, SBE strongly recommends that you purchase an external read/write CD Rom or an external ZIP drive.

Section 7.3 -Large Pre-Election Reports

Under state law, special reporting requirements take effect in the final two weeks before a Primary Election or General Election. During this period, candidates for statewide office must report to the State Board of Elections any contribution of more than $1,000 within 24 hours after receipt. The threshold for General Assembly candidates and political committees is $500.

The special requirements take effect 13 days prior to Election Day for a primary or general election and 11 days before a nominating convention. (Candidates running unopposed in a nominating convention are exempt.)

VAFiling does not support the disclosure of large, pre-election contributions. The State Board of Elections has set up an online interface for candidates to make disclosure. Point your browser to http://www.sbe.state.va.us/cfda/large/

This leads to a page asking for your Committee Code and Security Code. (If you need these numbers, please contact the Campaign Finance Division of the State Board of Elections in Richmond at 804-864-8901 or Toll-Free at 800.552.9745.)

Once you gain entry, you will come to a form where you enter each contribution at a time.

**** VAFiling Tips ****

Reporting a large, pre-election contribution does not relieve you of the duty to report the same information in on the full post-election report required by the State Board of Elections.

Section 7.4 -Mail Merge

VAFiling is designed primarily to assist campaigns in filing state-required disclosure reports. It is not intended to compete with comprehensive campaign management products offered by private vendors. Candidates and committees looking for comprehensive software with an e-filing option should consult the list of vendors whose products that meet State Board of Elections criteria for e-filing: http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/sbe_approved_vendors.htm

Nonetheless, many candidates and committees have been able to integrate VAFiling by varying degrees into their overall data management. Some candidates have used the data entered into VAFiling to generate mailing labels/envelopes for Thank You Notes and follow-up solicitations.

This is possible because information entered into VAFiling is not locked in a proprietary system. Rather, VAFiling employs a Microsoft® Access database. Access is a database manager that is part of the complete Microsoft ® Office suite.

In order to run a mail merge, a campaign must have a license for Microsoft® Access. Simply close VAFiling and open the database in Access. You may add fields at the end of each table, but **DO NOT** -- under any circumstances -- alter any of the existing fields in any table. Altering existing database structure or existing queries in **ANY WAY** will create instability in VAFiling and could cause a fatal loss of data.

**** VAFiling Tips ****

On the data-entry screen for each Schedule, use the “Memo” field to record information – such as a salutation – that can be used in a mail merge. You can store several variables in the single field, and later use an Update Query to populate some new fields. For instance, you could use a system where you’d put these values in the Memo field separated by a delimiter: ”Courtesy Title#Salutation#Corporate Contact Name” Create three corresponding fields at the end of the table and run an Update Query to populate the fields.

Section 7.5 - Importing Data into VAFiling

VAFiling makes it much easier to *export* data entered into VAFiling than to *import* data from another source into VAFiling. There is no button that says, "Import Data." Still, some campaign and committees wishing to avoid double-entering information have figured ways to append data from a central Microsoft® Access database into a VAFiling database.

The transfer process is not automated and requires more than a beginner's knowledge of Microsoft® Access. VAFiling tables have strict validation rules that, if not followed exactly, will reject importing your data.

For more information about importing data, contact David Poole at the Virginia Public Access Project, dpoole@vpap.org

Section 8: GETTING HELP

This handbook is designed to answer most of your questions about VAFiling. The State Board of Elections makes additional resources available to assist users.

Section 8.1- Online Resources

The State Board of Elections maintains an updated list of Frequently Asked Questions and other resources on its Web site. Point your browser to:
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Electronic-Filing/Electronic_Filing.htm

Section 8.2 - Help Desk Support

The non-partisan Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) is available to answer questions. Contact David Poole at dpoole@vpap.org.

The State Board of Elections also provides support to statewide candidates, General Assembly candidates, political committees and local candidates. E-mail your questions to SBE at efile@sbe.virginia.gov.